

## Early Modern Eyes

# Intersections

Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture

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# Early Modern Eyes

*Edited by*

Walter S. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel



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## INTRODUCTION

Lee Palmer Wandel

In Essay XII, Book II of his *Essais*, first published in 1580, Michel de Montaigne posed the question ‘Que sçay-je?’ What do I know? It was not a question of quantity – which piece of information he might possess. As he made clear in the “Apology for Raymond Sebond”, the key word in that question was the verb, know. At the end of roughly a century, which had begun with Columbus’s ‘discovery’, he asked whether one could know anything at all. He had been witness to many of the challenges: the bitter and violent confrontations between Huguenots and Catholics over revealed truth; conflicting accounts of peoples and cultures across bodies of water; the smashing of images in churches; the disconnect between Pliny’s system of visual organization of the natural world and unimagined animals, plants, and peoples. Between the arrival of Columbus’s first letters and the death of Étienne de la Boétie, European eyes had been at the center. Discovery, iconoclasm, revelation, observation all presumed some kind of a direct relationship between the human eye and knowledge. And as Montaigne detailed so carefully, none took into account either the subjectivity of the eye or the role of prior knowledge in shaping what the eye could see.

In the seventeenth century, Descartes sought to formulate a durable answer to Montaigne’s question, and Cartesianism – in which the mind is construed as a thing apart from body or things ‘external’ to the mind – seemed for three centuries to hold.<sup>1</sup> In the twentieth century, Cartesianism came under widespread and substantial criticism, opening new questions of perspective, the subjectivity of any epistemology, the role of images in cognition, and the relationship of body and mind.

Those questions have been taken up with particular fertility in the study of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Scholars in anthropology and ethnography, art history, geography and cartography, history, history of science, and national literatures have explored with deepening sophistication and sensitivity what might broadly be called the

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<sup>1</sup> Rorty R., *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: 1979).

subjective eye. In 1972, Michael Baxandall posited the notion of ‘the period eye’: the ways in which the perception of visual values – such as scale, perspective, texture, color, and line – was dialectically intertwined with contemporary social relations and economic practices.<sup>2</sup> In 1982, Anthony Pagden took up early modern ethnography and the categories, drawn predominantly from classical texts, Europeans brought to bear on their ‘witnessing’.<sup>3</sup> In 1992, Stephen Greenblatt linked a growing body of work on wonder with the burgeoning study of the Columbian ‘encounter’.<sup>4</sup> In 1994, Stuart Schwarz published a collection of essays on European ‘visions’ of other peoples, those peoples’ ‘visions’ of Europeans, blurring distinctions between ‘perception’ and ‘observation’.<sup>5</sup>

While Baxandall’s conception of the ‘period eye’ had repercussions for work on Europeans’ perceptions of the peoples of the Americas and elsewhere, penetrating scholarship on observation and perception, he was himself engaged with the interplay of eye and made object. He belonged to an extraordinary generation of art historians who returned to familiar images, who sought to move past the categories of analysis in which they had been trained – schools and masters, technique and realism – to explore a far more complex dialectic of eye and object. In 1965, Sixton Ringbom explored the relationship between what he called ‘pictorial forms’ and religious devotion.<sup>6</sup> In 1983, Svetlana Alpers challenged the criteria by which, in particular, images produced in the early modern Netherlands had been viewed and judged, arguing for an ‘art of describing’, as discrete from an Italian narrative art.<sup>7</sup> So,

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy; a Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: 1972; second edition, Oxford: 1988); and idem, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany, 1475–1525: Images and Circumstances* (New Haven: 1980). On Baxandall’s influence, see Langdale A., “Aspects of the Critical Reception and Intellectual History of Baxandall’s Concept of the Period Eye”, *Art History* 21(1998) 479–497. For a close exploration of Baxandall’s method and concepts, see Baker M., “Limewood, Chiromancy and Narratives of Making. Writing about the materials and processes of sculpture”, *Art History* 21(1998) 498–530.

<sup>3</sup> Pagden A., *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Greenblatt S., *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: 1992); Greenblatt S. (ed.), *New World Encounters* (Berkeley: 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Schwarz S., *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Ringbom S., *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-century Devotional Painting* (originally published in *Acta Academiae Aboensis*, Ser. A.; Second edition, Doornspijk: 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Alpers S., *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: 1983).

too, in 1983, Norman Bryson argued for a mutually informing interplay, a 'logic', between an image and what he called 'the gaze'.<sup>8</sup> In 1990, Martin Kemp took up the ways in which images reflected and depicted the principles of optics operating in a particular society at a particular time, linking, as he said, science and art, in shared theories about the operating of the human eye.<sup>9</sup>

At once echoing and separate from this work in art history, a group of map historians began to explore maps as something made to shape perception, in this instance, of space.<sup>10</sup> In 1987, J.B. Harley and David Woodward published the first volume of *The History of Cartography: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*.<sup>11</sup> In the very title, the two intended to mark a shift, from a history of maps to something far more complex. They and their contributors approached maps as complex cultural artifacts, which, at the simplest level, enabled them to include under the rubric 'map' a range of different kinds of images and objects. At a deeper level, that way of speaking about maps invited scholars of Asia, Latin America, Africa, and pre-modern periods to explore what certain cultural objects were seeking to 'represent', following Harley, through a system of signs that particular culture accepted as conventional.

Inspired in part by Walter Ong's work on the transition to print in the early modern period,<sup>12</sup> historians explored the printed page as a seen object that itself shapes modes of cognition. In a series of essays, originally presented in the 1970s, collected and published in 1987, Roger Chartier explored the ways in which print – not simply texts, but their material form and its visualities – shaped thinking.<sup>13</sup> Since

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<sup>8</sup> Bryson N., *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Kemp M., *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: 1990).

<sup>10</sup> One of the earliest to explore maps in this way was J.B. Harley, who began his career working on English survey maps, and whose earliest engagements with the problem of 'representation' took up the political functions of maps. See Harley J.B., *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, Paul Laxton (ed.), (Baltimore and London: 2001).

<sup>11</sup> (Chicago: 1987).

<sup>12</sup> Ong W., *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: 1958); idem, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: 1967).

<sup>13</sup> Chartier R., *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, Lydia G. Cochrane (trans.), (Princeton: 1987). Another group of scholars, influenced by Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: 1962), took up the printing press as a technological revolution. See foremost, Eisenstein E., *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: 1979).

1987, Chartier has refined and extended his argument, detailing the ways in which the particular materialities of the codex or the physicalities of the print medium – front to back, right to left, columns, paragraphs, the spacing of words – have implications for how human beings organize as well as articulate their knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

Working in a number of different disciplines and along a number of different lines of inquiry, these scholars have called into question key terms in our thinking about the eye: the ‘objectivity’ of such visual values as perspective and balance; the relationship between observation or witnessing and subjectivity; the ways in which ‘representation’ implicates the eye of the beholder.

In the wake of their work, ‘perspective’ can be understood simultaneously as a system of signs arising in a mercantile culture and a way of conceptualizing individual sight. Perspective as system of converging lines situates the viewer in relationship to a two-dimensional image. At the same time, scholarship on the Columbian encounter/exchange situated perspective, physically, in persons it treated as members of historically specific cultures: sixteenth-century Europe, Aztec, Inca.

That scholarship enriched our thinking about ‘representation’ even more. In focusing attention on the words Europeans abroad chose to name what they said was before their eyes, scholarship on the ‘new world’ challenged any understanding of representation as something transparent or single-dimensional.<sup>15</sup> Even as that group of scholars complicated representation as a relationship between words and the seen world, a separate group of scholars, following Ringbom’s work, began bringing to bear on their analysis of devotional art the lens of contemporary theology. They drew upon a very different vocabulary to reconceptualize ‘representation’ in a culture that had so richly grappled with the doctrine of the Incarnation and its implications for made objects.<sup>16</sup> Historians of cartography have argued persuasively that two- and three-dimensional ‘representations’ of the earth and the globe, of geographic space and human place,<sup>17</sup> are equally epistemo-

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<sup>14</sup> Chartier R., *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Cochrane L.G. (trans.) (Stanford: 1994); idem, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: 1995).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Adorno R., *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: 1986).

<sup>16</sup> One of the earliest such works was Miles M., *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: 1985).

<sup>17</sup> On the distinction between these two concepts, see foremost, Tuan Y., *Space and*

logically complex, at once drawing upon a system of signs that are conventional in order to shape perception of space.

Even as this scholarship was first complicating our understanding of the relationship between the eye and object or other person – observation, witnessing, viewing, perception – and demonstrating the inadequacy of any simple model of ‘reception’, David Lindberg published *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*.<sup>18</sup> Gathering diverse theories of the anatomy of the eye, the physiology of the visual system, the mathematical principles of perspective and the psychology of visual perception together, Lindberg documented the plethora of modes of thinking about sight prior to Kepler’s theory of the retinal image. Lindberg’s careful descriptions of individual theories revealed not simply the absence of any single unified theory of optics prior to Kepler, but how very differently classical, Arabic, medieval, and early modern theorists of vision conceptualized the eye, the mechanics of sight, the mathematics of perspective, and visual perception.

In particular, Lindberg detailed distinctive theories of intromission – in which the object, which exists outside the eye somehow enters the eye, often through ‘species’ or lines of sight – and extramission – in which the eye reached out to the seen object in some way. In these theories, scholars found another set of conceptual coordinates to understand better early modern theories of perspective, representation, and the image and ways of conceiving visual cognition that moved past the model that currently underlies most work on modern vision. The notion that images entered the eye and through the eye, the mind, opened new ways of approaching first devotional images, and then other sorts of visible objects. While modern studies of visual culture and vision were normally built upon modern optics’ model of the organism, early modern scholarship could explore alternative ways of conceptualizing what might be called visual cognition, in which made objects and the human eye were bound up together in a complex dynamic.

The models of the eye and of visual cognition delineated in Lindberg’s work also offered news ways of thinking about ‘the invisible’, both as an early modern concept and as a judgment modern scholars

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*Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: 1977); Sack R.D., *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective* (Minneapolis: 1980); idem, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: 1986).

<sup>18</sup> Lindberg D., *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: 1976).

had applied to early modern phenomena. Herbert Kessler, Klaus Krüger, Christine Göttler, and other art historians have explored the ways in which medieval and early modern artists sought to ‘picture’ (Kessler’s term) or to make of the image a veil of the invisible (Krüger) or render in matter ‘unseen spirits’ (Göttler).<sup>19</sup> In each of these studies, scholars drew upon a more complex conceptualization of visual cognition in order to explore the ways in which ‘images’ engaged through their materialities with that which, according to early modern Europeans, could not be seen. While eschewing Lindberg’s argument for the plurality of models of visual perception, Stuart Clark has drawn upon Lindberg’s argument for those models’ essential difference from modern theories of optics to explore early modern notions of ‘vision’, primarily demonic and fantastic.<sup>20</sup> Each of these scholars has brought new layers to our understanding of ‘vision’ and ‘the invisible’, and their relationship to cognition.

In the expanding interdisciplinarity of the past two decades this work was read in turn by people working in other disciplines and on other kinds of artifacts. That cross fertilization, which is very much evident in the essays collected in this volume, is leading to a wonderfully rich conceptualization of the human eye. Among early modernists, the eye links images and exploration, representation and the theology of Incarnation, optics and perspective, observation and cartography. That eye was the focus of a conference Walter Melion, Neil Whitehead, and I organized in 2006. The scholars we brought together came from anthropology and ethnography, art history, English and French literature, history of science, and history. Denis Cosgrove was to participate until his health made that impossible. His presence, I believe, is still visible in the work of a number of the contributors.

Even as I invoked ‘the human eye’, however, the work in this volume demonstrates there is not one ‘early modern eye’, but many eyes.

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<sup>19</sup> Kessler H., *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God’s Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: 2000); Krüger K., *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren: Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien* (Munich: 2001); Göttler C., “Preface: Vapours and Veils: The Edge of the Unseen”, in Göttler C. and Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture* (Leiden: 2008) *Intersections. Yearbook of Early Modern Studies* 9, xv–xxvii. Much of this also draws upon work on the relationship between images and cognition in medieval thought. See foremost, Caruthers M., *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Clark S., *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2007).

At one level, as many of these papers suggest, there was no shared visual education, not among Christians in Europe, not imposed by Europeans on subject colonial peoples. At another level, as Walter Melion suggests in his study of Peter Canisius's *De Maria Virgine*, within the continent of Europe, even among those who called themselves Catholic, there was no clear consensus, what the relationship between the human eye and the made object was – even as Canisius sought to shape what it should be. As Tom Conley suggests, sixteenth-century Europeans took up small and subtle visual cues to differentiate ways of seeing we are still in the process of delineating.

The following articles take up such diverse artifacts as a Jesuit mariological text, cosmographies, Calvin's *Institutes*, Las Casas's *Apologia*, Hans Staden's Testimony, and the Codex Telleriano-Remensis. The sheer breadth of sources – from a guide for reading Scripture, through the testimony of a captive, to an illuminated manuscript produced in a Spanish colony – offers a kind of panopticon of the different venues in which early modern persons engaged with questions of the eye. Each object, text, artifact offers a different angle of approach, a different lens through which we might consider the eye. Each is, at the same time, a distinctive site in which questions of witnessing, perception, representation, cognition and the visual intersect uniquely.

The articles in this volume are not organized according to broad themes. They intersect and resonate with one another at a number of levels, resisting the efforts of an editor to sort them into clean categories. That, too, is one of the legacies of interdisciplinarity: the slow, and one might add, natural erosion of ancient boundaries that served to organize, here, a book. Instead, let me suggest here some of the intersections that link these articles. When read together, these articles resonate with one another, deepening the insights of one another through the reverberations, the echoes, of methods, terms, points of entry.

*Witnessing and Representation:* Neil Whitehead and José Rabasa explore the interplay of witnessing and translation in two very different artifacts. Whitehead draws upon his training as an ethnographer to explore the tension between Hans Staden's efforts to communicate the authenticity as well as the strangeness of his experience of the Tupi, and in particular, their anthropophagy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the woodcut illustrations of his Testimony, which negotiated visually between conventional signs and the unfamiliarity of what von Staden was claiming to have witnessed. Rabasa takes up a very different sort of artifact, the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, a manuscript illuminated

by a native artist, for the complexity of the witnessing there rendered in line, color, and sign. In so doing, he reveals a multi-layered interplay between subjectivity and sight. Michel Weemans interrogates ‘the spectator’ and with it, the act of visual exegesis, as they are instantiated in Herri met de Bles’s “Landscape with David and Bathsheba”.

*Visual Epistemologies:* Tom Conley analyzes images that accompanied Gilles Corrozet’s *Hécatomgraphie* and different editions of Pieter Apian’s *Cosmographia* as they reveal different ways of conceptualizing, as well as perceiving, oneself in the abstract space of the globe and the specific space of topography. Nicolás Wey-Gómez interrogates Bartholomé de Las Casas’ conception of optics and its role in his effort to locate the cultures and peoples of the Americas within certain referents and not others.

*Vision:* Walter Melion explicates the image theory of Peter Canisius’s *De Maria Virgine*, a text which sought to use images to shape both inner vision and perception of outward religious practice. My own piece takes up John Calvin and Michel de Montaigne and their critique of the models of eye and brain upon which natural theology rested.

In bringing together work on optic theory, ethnography, the visual cultures of Christianity, cosmography and topography, the volume hopes to offer a sense of the richness and the complexity of early modern thinking about the human eye. In bringing together discussions of vision, representation, witnessing, and the relationship between vision and knowledge, it hopes to restore something of the complexity of their intersections in the early modern world.



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THE POLITICS OF LIGHT:  
AL-KINDĪ'S GEOMETRICAL OPTICS AND THE  
VINDICATION OF THE AMERICAN TROPICS  
IN BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS'S  
*APOLOGÉTICA HISTORIA SUMARIA* (1527–1561)<sup>1</sup>

Nicolás Wey Gómez

The earliest 'westerners' known to have set eyes on the Bahamas and Caribbean Basin alternately marveled and shuddered at the nature and culture of an expanse where the sun shone more pervasively than anywhere in Mediterranean Europe. Upon his return to Europe in 1493, the most consequential of these early travelers, Christopher Columbus (about 1451–1506), hastened to inform the court of Aragon and Castile that his maiden voyage across the ocean *to the parts of India* (so reads Columbus's peculiar passport) had led his armada to a place where the sun's rays rose steeper and shone stronger than back home. This was not just a casual observation by a tourist dazzled by the tropics. Since at least the time of Herodotus (about 489–about 425 BCE), Mediterranean geography had culled such information from itinerants in order to establish at least the general latitude of faraway places like sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. But as I am about to suggest, the Discoverer and other early naturalists to the New World also participated, with varying degrees of erudition, in a scientific and technical tradition that regarded sunlight and all other forms of celestial radiation as a divine efflux possessing generative power in the region of the elements. So it should be no surprise that discussions concerning the *nature* of what came to be called *Indias Occidentales* crucially alluded to the 'aspect' of the skies over that newly discovered orb; nor that such discussions – in as far as early modern culture thought of itself as nature's culture – should have brought in tow the political lessons

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<sup>1</sup> A leave granted by Brown University in Spring 2007 gave me time to conduct research for this essay. I am indebted to the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University for my time there as a Visiting Researcher, particularly to Anne Harrington, Janet Browne, and Mario Biagioli for their generosity of spirit, and, above all, to Katharine Park for inspiring me to love all things marvelous and monstrous.

Mediterranean Europe was willing to draw from its encounter with the tropical peoples of the Americas.

This essay broadly concerns early modern Europe's changing and contradictory certainties about the region of the globe we know as the belt of the tropics. I examine the remarkable view of Amerindian nature and culture to be found in a philosophico-technical treatise titled "Apologetic Summary History, Concerned with the Qualities, Disposition, Description, Heaven, and Earth of these Lands, as well as with the Natural Dispositions, Politics, Republics, Manners of Life, and Customs of the Peoples of these Western and Meridional Indies, Whose Sovereign Domain Belongs to the Monarchs of Castile".<sup>2</sup> This compendious 'natural' and 'moral' history of the Americas – *history* denoting something technical like a *record* or *register* – was composed by the humanitarian friar Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) as a complement to his equally hefty anticolonialist account of the early decades of European expansion to the Bahamas and Caribbean Basin, *Historia de las Indias* (1527–1561).<sup>3</sup> Las Casas devoted over fifty years of his life to protecting native peoples against the abuses perpetrated by European colonizers and to contesting the terms of the conquest.<sup>4</sup> He not only fought for the abolition of Indian slavery and of *encomiendas* – the system of forced labor that supported agriculture and mining in the overseas colonies – but even came to regard the Spanish occupation of the Americas as itself sinful and illegal. Consider one of Las Casas's most memorable indictments of the conquest, which was pub-

<sup>2</sup> Casas Bartolomé de las, *Apologética historia sumaria quanto a las qualidades, dispusición, descripción, cielo y suelo destas tierras, y condiciones naturales, policias, repúblicas, maneras de vivir e costumbres de las gentes destas Indias occidentales y meridionales, cuyo imperio soberano pertenece a los reyes de Castilla*, ed. V. Abril Castelló, 3 vols. [Obras completas: Bartolomé de las Casas 6–8] (Madrid: 1992) I, 283. All translations from the *Apologética* are my own.

<sup>3</sup> For the multiple senses in which the term *historia* came to be used in the early modern period, see Pomata G. – Siraisi N. (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* [Transformations: Studies in the History of Science and Technology] (Cambridge, Mass.: 2005), especially the essays by Grafton A., "The identities of History in Early Modern Europe: Prelude to a Study of the *Artes Historicae*", 41–74; Ogilvie B.W., "Natural History, Ethics, and Physico-Theology", 75–104, and Pomata G., "*Praxis Historialis*: The Uses of *Historia* in Early Modern medicine", 105–146.

<sup>4</sup> For reliable biographies of Las Casas, see Wagner H.R. – Parish H.R., *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas* (Albuquerque: 1967); Parish H.R. – Weidman H.E., *Las Casas en México: Historia y obra desconocidas* (Mexico City: 1992); and Parish H.R., "Las Casas's Spirituality – The Three Crises", in Parish H.R. (ed.) – Sullivan F.P. (trans.), *Bartolomé de las Casas: The Only Way* (New York: 1992) 9–58. On Las Casas's learning, see Adorno R., *The Intellectual Life of Bartolomé de las Casas* (New Orleans: 1992), Andrew W. Mellon Lectures.

lished in the wake of the Juntas de Valladolid (1550–1551) summoned by Charles V to debate the legality and future of Spain's overseas ventures – where Las Casas had faced the skillful apologist for the Crown Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573). Among a handful of subversive treatises Las Casas would hasten to print without royal license in 1552 stands a confessional guide that had already earned him the charge of high treason before the Council of Castile shortly after his last return from the New World in 1547. In this guide, Las Casas instructed the priests of his Mexican bishopric to deny final absolution to colonists who failed to return all property originally taken from Indians in their care, reasoning that 'all deeds performed throughout these Indies – from the arrival of Spaniards in each of its provinces, to the subjection and enslavement of its peoples, along with all means adopted and goals pursued within or near its confines – stand against all natural and civil law, and also against divine law. Consequently, everything done here is unjust, iniquitous, tyrannical, and deserving of all infernal fires'. In the later years of his life, Las Casas even tried to persuade Charles's unsympathetic heir Philip II to restore the stolen booty of Peru to its rightful owners, going so far as to declare before the Council of the Indies that the devastation of the Americas had conferred on native peoples the right 'to wage the most just of wars against us and to eradicate us from the face of the earth, and this right will abide with them until judgment day'.<sup>5</sup> In the years following the Valladolid juntas, an increasingly uncompromising Las Casas saw it as necessary to excise the embryonic arguments of his 'apology' for the Americas from the anticolonialist *Historia de las Indias*, in order to compose the treatise we know today as *Apologética historia sumaria*.

As a commentary on existing literature about American nature and culture, the *Apologética* was written with a close eye to the influential *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535 onward) by the royal historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who maintained that Spaniards had been the scourge visited by God on the Indians for 'the great and ugly and ominous sins and abominations of these savage and bestial

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<sup>5</sup> See the treatises offered by Las Casas as testament and codicil to Philip II in 1565: *De Thesauris*, ed. A. Losada [Obras completas: Bartolomé de las Casas 11] (Madrid: 1992); *Tratado de las doce dudas*, ed. J.B. Lassegue – O.P. Denglos [Obras completas: Bartolomé de las Casas 12] (Madrid: 1992). This quote is taken from the petition accompanying both treatises, which Las Casas read before the Council of the Indies just before his death (*Doce dudas* 218; my translation).

peoples'.<sup>6</sup> But the *Apologética* was more fundamentally meant to strike at the nerve center of a debate concerning Spain's rights in the Americas.<sup>7</sup> This debate may have haunted crown circles as early as 1495, when a council convened by Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile ruled that the Indians procured by Columbus from the first massive slave raids on the island of Hispaniola could not be considered slaves or sold as such in the market of Seville.<sup>8</sup> But this debate had taken a particularly eerie turn around 1512, when a round of public sermons launched by the Dominican friars of Santo Domingo against the abuses visited by Christian colonists on Hispaniola's native population prompted King Fernando, by then regent of Castile in place of the deceased Isabel, to reassert his titles to the new orb.<sup>9</sup> Until then, those titles appear to have rested largely on the contentious claim that Alexander VI's famous papal bulls donating the Indies to the Catholic Monarchs in 1493 constituted an endorsement of the right to colonize the newly discovered territories and even to subject or enslave their peoples (the premise that popes had the right to dispense with the lives and possessions of non-Christians had long been a hard sell with theologians and canonists in Europe).<sup>10</sup> But following the junta summoned in Burgos to discuss the question of the Indies, a certain 'bachelor' Gregorio Mesa came to suggest that it might be more promising to focus instead on whether or not there was *something* about the Indians themselves that justified subjecting or enslaving them. In his *parecer* or opinion answering the question of whether or not Indians could be enslaved, Mesa brought to bear Aristotle's discussion of natural slavery

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<sup>6</sup> Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés G., *La historia natural y moral de las Indias* 3.6 (Seville, Johannes Cromberger: 1535) fol. xxvii r.

<sup>7</sup> This debate is well-known in the English-speaking world thanks largely to Hanke L., *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (London: 1959) and Pagden A., *The Fall of Natural Man: The American indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: 1982). In what follows, I am especially indebted to Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* 27–108. Important objections to the role these scholars have assigned to the concepts of nature and slavery in this debate appear in Adorno R., *De Guanacane a Macondo: Estudios de literatura hispanoamericana* [Colección Iluminaciones 38] (Sevilla: 2008) 19–46.

<sup>8</sup> Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* 31.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 30–37. As Pagden notes, our only source on these momentous protests by the Dominicans is none other than Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* 3.1.2.3–6. I have consulted the edition by Medina M.A. et al. [Obras completas: Bartolomé de las Casas 3–5] (Madrid: 1994) III: 1757–1774.

<sup>10</sup> For a classic account of this controversy, see Muldoon J., *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World 1250–1550* (Philadelphia: 1979).

in the *Politics*.<sup>11</sup> He ventured that Indians might be slaves on no other account than their 'lack of understanding and capacity, and the absence of will to persevere in the practice of the Faith and of lofty customs, for that is the condition of natural slavery, as the philosopher says. Or perhaps they are, he says, 'slaves on account of the nature of the land because there are certain lands that the aspect of the heavens renders subject to others, and [they could not be properly governed] if there were not some sort of slavery in them [...]'.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, this *geopolitical* argument based on the 'aspect' of the skies overseas was to serve for decades as an implicit or explicit basis for empire's apologists, who alleged the inferiority of the Indians. Foremost among these apologists was the distinguished translator of Aristotle Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573), Las Casas's foe in the debates of Valladolid convened in 1550 and 1551 by Charles V to consider the legality of Spain's overseas adventures.<sup>13</sup> What follows is an effort succinctly to explain the pivotal role that the field of *perspectiva* or optics would play in Las Casas's attempt to invalidate one of Spain's most precious titles to its possessions in the Americas. Indeed, optics underwrites Las Casas's unprecedented argument in the *Apologética* that nature in the West Indies, contrary to traditional claims regarding the belt of the tropics, was not at all scorched, barren, and desolate, but instead more generally temperate, fertile, and inhabitable – indeed, more *perfect* – than nature anywhere in the Old World, including the allegedly complexionate Mediterranean Europe. American nature had fostered a culture that was in no fundamental way inferior to any other culture around the globe, and therefore no

<sup>11</sup> For Aristotle's theory of slavery, see *Politics* I. I have consulted Jowett B. (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols. [Bollingen Series 71.2] (Princeton: 1995) II, 1986–2129. On the concept of slaves 'by nature', see *Politics* 1.5–6. A succinct explanation of Aristotle's concept of natural slavery appears in Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* 41–47.

<sup>12</sup> Las Casas, *Historia* 3.2.1.9, III, 1785; emphasis added. See also Pagden's analysis of Mesa's 'opinion' in *The Fall of Natural Man* 47–50.

<sup>13</sup> Wey Gómez N., *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* [Transformations: Studies in the History of Science and Technology] (Cambridge, Mass.: 2008) 59–106. On this aspect of Las Casas's efforts to oppose Sepúlveda, see Wagner and Parish, *The Life and Writings of Bartolomé de las Casas* 170–182. For documentation on Las Casas vs. Sepúlveda, see Pérez Fernández I., *Cronología documentada de los viajes, estancias y actuaciones de Fray Bartolomé de las Casas* [Estudios monográficos 2] (Bayamón: 1984) 721–807. Sepúlveda used the same reasoning as Mesa in Argument 4 of his *Apología*, printed in Rome in 1550: *Apología en favor del libro sobre las justas causas de la guerra*, ed. A. Moreno Hernández, trans. A. Losada [Obras completas 3] (Pozoblanco, Spain: 1997), 197. Their source was Thomas Aquinas's *In libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio* I.1.i.23 (Rome: 1951) 23.

one could credibly claim that Amerindians were *by nature* Spain's legal subjects or slaves.

First impressions tend to carry lasting consequences, and the encounter between the Old and New Worlds is no exception. In order to appreciate *what* it is that most deeply impressed upon early modern Europeans the lasting perception that Amerindian nature and culture were radically different from Mediterranean Europe's, one must first understand something Las Casas knew as Columbus's most able early biographer: the territories originally won by Columbus for the crowns of Aragon and Castile were not just anywhere across the Atlantic, but rather to the west *and to the south* of Mediterranean Europe, near and within the reaches of the reputedly inhospitable belt of the globe called the torrid zone [Fig. 1].

I would argue that Columbus's invention of the so-called West Indies as a tropical place was to have huge consequences for European understandings of American nature and culture long after exploration and colonization spread beyond the bounds of the tropics. Indeed, Columbus had also sailed *south* to the Indies.<sup>14</sup> This fact is acknowledged by the most diverse documents of the period – from the peculiar papal bulls by Alexander VI donating to Fernando and Isabel the newly discovered territories *versus occidentem et meridiem*, to the histories and cosmographies that would celebrate Portugal's and Castile's exploration of vast inhabited territories in the belt of the tropics, to the arguments of learned scholars like Mesa and Sepúlveda who applied themselves to the question of the Indies, and, of course, to Las Casas's *Apologética historia*, which concerns *estas Indias occidentales y meridionales*. In fact, no one to this day may have more clearly visualized the verticality of the early transatlantic encounter than Las Casas. His *Historia de las Indias*, which prominently features Columbus's life and works, also remains the fiercest, most thorough indictment on record of the process of territorial and political expansion that Las Casas termed Europe's 'destruction' (*destruyçion*) of what we know as the African and American tropics.<sup>15</sup> And as a complement to the *Historia*, the *Apologética* itself constitutes an attempt to show, by way of weighing fresh American evidence against the conventional wisdom of a millenarian

<sup>14</sup> For this argument in full, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire*.

<sup>15</sup> Las Casas's sense of this 'destruction' was famously broadcast by the *Brevissima relación dela destruyçion delas yndias* (Seville, Sebastian Trugillo: 1552).



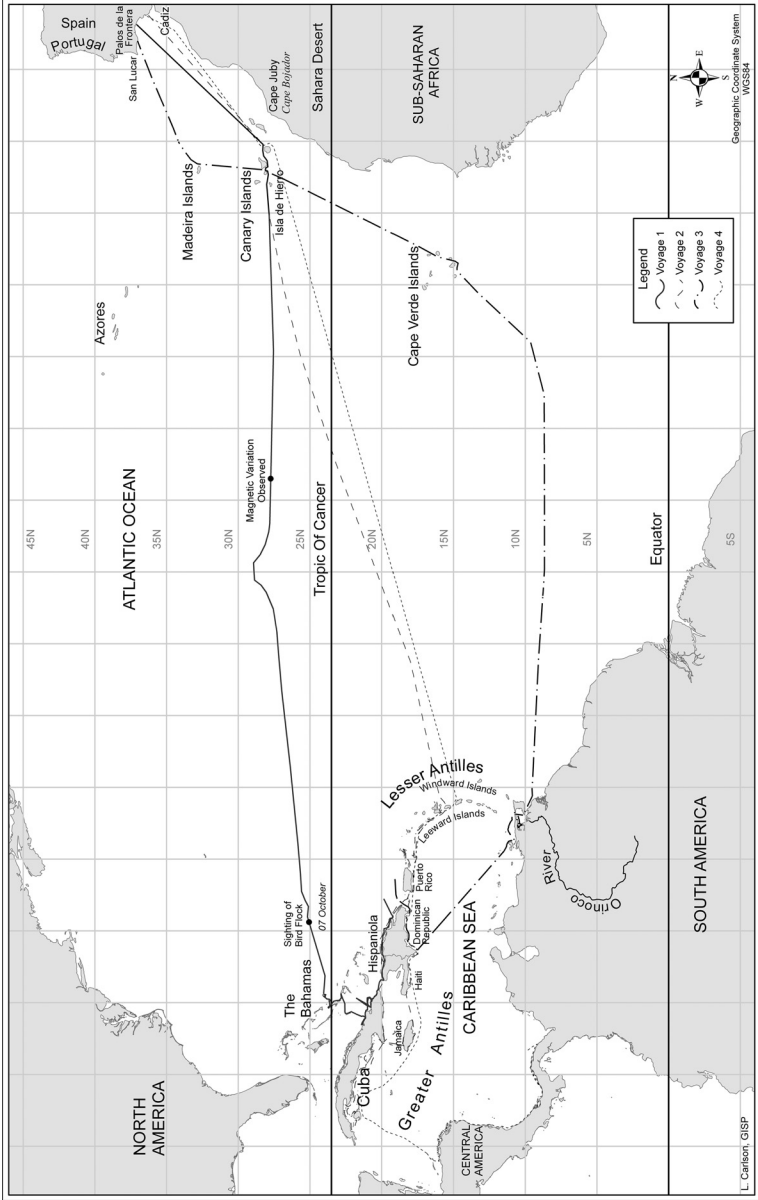


Fig. 1. Christopher Columbus's four voyages, 1492–1504. After S.E. Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, 2 vols. (Boston: 1942). Prepared by L. Carlson, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

commentary tradition about the tropics, why Europeans had been so mistaken to construe themselves as the natural heirs to the Indies. Las Casas's learned understanding of Columbus's geopolitics and its legacy thus serves as a crucial context for the arguments at stake in the *Apologética*.

For Columbus and his contemporaries, 'India' comprehended far more than the subcontinent we know by that name today.<sup>16</sup> Following the theoretical cartography of Eratosthenes (3rd–2nd c. BCE), Mediterranean geographers had long conceived of India as a quarter of the inhabited world extending indefinitely to the south of the parallel that joined the Strait of Gibraltar with the farthest reaches of the so-called Taurus mountain-range, and indefinitely to the east of the River Nile [Fig. 2]. Columbus's 'India' itself carried a slightly more restrictive meaning than Eratosthenes's, for it was primarily a *maritime* India. By the time Columbus first crossed the Atlantic, this India had come to be graphically represented as a complex geographical system organized around that distinctly tropical accident we know today as the Indian Ocean. Consider the cartographic work most closely associated with the Discoverer's ideas of the Far East, the state-of-the-art globe presented by Martin Behaim to the town of Nuremberg in 1492 [Fig. 3]. Behaim's India, which drew directly from Marco Polo's *Il milione* (ca. 1300), was largely placed between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. It ranged from the islands of Madagascar and Zanzibar (off of Africa's southeasternmost tip), along the coasts of east Africa and southern Asia, around the Malaysian Peninsula into the South China Sea, and all the way to Japan, a huge tropical island right on the tropic of Cancer and conceived as part of a mega-archipelago that gestured indefinitely toward the east, in the direction of Atlantic Africa. Because the extended basin of the Indian Ocean shared the same general *tropical* latitudes with sub-Saharan Africa, Mediterranean geographers had always drawn close parallels between the natures and cultures of the places known as Ethiopia and India. Not surprisingly, when Columbus set foot in the Bahamas and Caribbean Basin, his observations about the nature and culture of a place that he conceptualized as the easternmost reaches of extra-Gangetic India were strongly informed by an ancient geographical tradition that drew significant distinctions between the higher, cooler latitudes of Mediterranean Europe and the

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<sup>16</sup> On Pre-Columbian Europe's understanding of the term India, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 159–228.

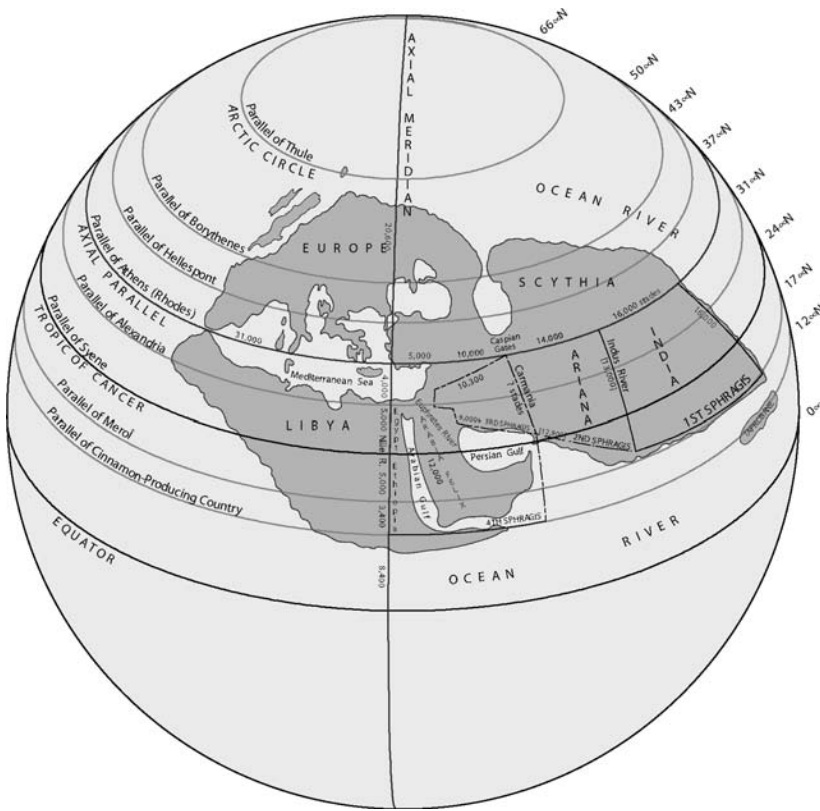


Fig. 2. Reconstruction of Eratosthenes's world map. After Strabo, *Geography* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1917–1932). Prepared by L. Carlson, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

lower, hotter latitudes of the Afro-Indian tropics. Thus, in the instantly famous printed letter to Luis de Santángel announcing the discovery (1493), Columbus remarked about his India that he had failed to find ‘monstrous men as so many expected. On the contrary, all are people of beautiful countenances, *nor are they black as in Guinea*, except that they do have lank hair [as Indians were perceived to display], *and they do not generate where the aspect of the solar rays is too strong*; [though] *it is true that the sun is very strong there*, as [those lands] stand twenty-six degrees from the equinoctial line’.<sup>17</sup> Indian informants had apparently warned an

<sup>17</sup> Tudela y Bueso J.P. de et al. (eds.), *Colección documental del Descubrimiento (1470–1506)*, 3 vols. (Madrid: 1994) I, 254–255; emphasis mine. All translations from this collection of Columbiana are my own.

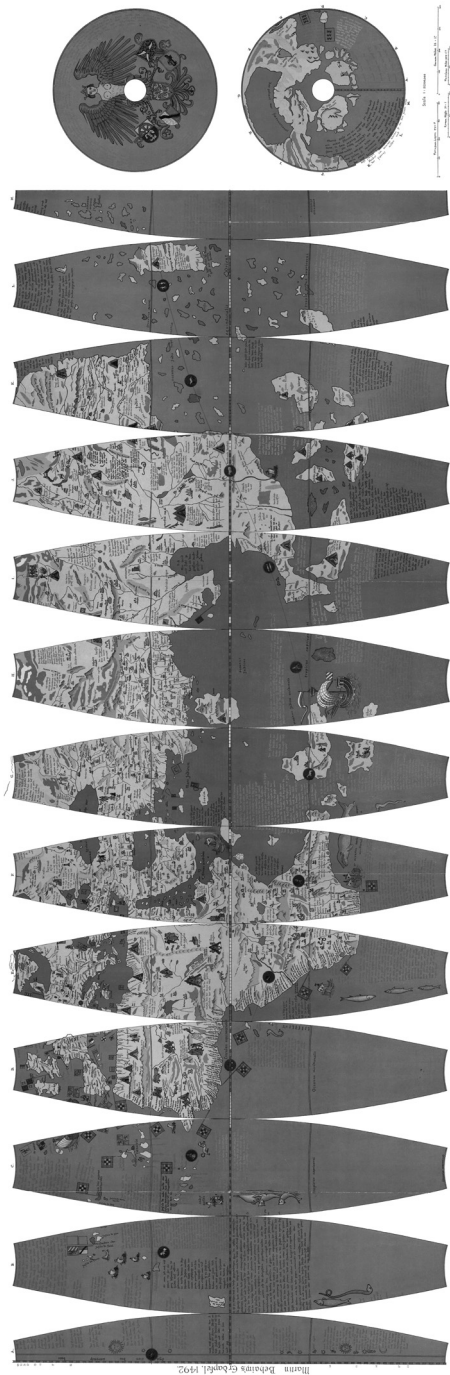


Fig 3. Martin Behaim's globe, 1492. From E. G. Ravenstein, *Martin Behaim: His Life and His Globe* (London: 1908). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Original globe at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany.

initially skeptical Columbus that farther along, in what today would have been the southeastern corner of the Caribbean Basin, an island could be found inhabited by 'a people who are regarded in all the islands as very fierce and who consume living flesh'.<sup>18</sup> It must be noted that Columbus had been forbidden by Fernando and Isabel from sailing anywhere to the south of the Canaries and toward Atlantic Africa, an expanse that Castile already recognized by treaty as belonging to Portugal.<sup>19</sup> Anticipating that Portugal would want to claim exclusivity to *everything* below the Canaries when it learned of the new discoveries in the high Atlantic, Columbus refused officially to acknowledge that he had southed his way all the way to what he actually believed was the Tropic of Cancer at 24° N on Hispaniola's northern coast (on this voyage alone, he had in fact southed all the way from about 36° N near the Strait of Gibraltar to a latitude of just 19° N) [Fig. 4]. But Columbus did perfectly understand that he had southed his way from Europe to the very entrance to the tropics, a place where the sun was 'very strong' and where what he calls the 'aspect of the solar rays' could be 'too strong' for habitation.<sup>20</sup> We shall return shortly to the problem of solar and other planetary rays in the belt of the tropics, and to its bearing on tropical nature and culture in the eyes of early modern Europeans. As Las Casas's *Apologética* shows, this problem demands a basic understanding of geometrical optics as the field had been developed by an early generation of Latin Aristotelians, including the Oxo-nians Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, and more to the point, a predecessor of Las Casas in the Dominican Order, the eminent naturalist Albertus Magnus (about 1200–1280). For now, let us only state that in Columbus's initial relief at failing to stumble into any 'monsters'

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., I, 255.

<sup>19</sup> In a peace accord signed years before, the Treaty of Alcáçovas (1479–1480), Castile had recognized Portugal's sovereignty in the expanse below the Canaries and toward Guinea in exchange for Portugal's recognition of Castilian sovereignty in the Canaries. See Doc. 29 in Adão da Fonseca L. – Ruiz Asencio J.M., *Corpus documental del Tratado de Tordesillas* (Valladolid, Lisbon: 1995) 68–92; 158–167. This treaty served as a fundamental reference in future legal disputes between the two powers for control over the Atlantic, until the drafting of the famous Treaty of Tordesillas (7 June 1494), which divided the Atlantic along an east-west axis. On the Spanish interpretation of Alcáçovas until the signing of Tordesillas, see Castañeda F.P., "El tratado de Alcaçobas y su interpretación hasta la negociación del Tratado de Tordesillas", in *El Tratado de Tordesillas y su proyección: Primer coloquio luso-españols de historia de ultramar; Segundas jornadas americanistas de la Universidad de Valladolid*, 2 vols. (Valladolid: 1973) I, 103–115.

<sup>20</sup> For a fuller analysis of Columbus's understanding of the route of the first voyage, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 5–19.



in the Indies (at least on his first voyage) and in his understated dismay at failing to spot the 'black' and, thereby, also 'monstrous' peoples one would have expected to find along the same African latitudes below the Sahara known to the Portuguese as Guinea, we have a significant glimpse of the established perception among Mediterranean geographers that the 'cold' and 'hot' extremes of the known inhabited world, especially the 'hot' region of Ethiopia and India, were veritable factories of marvels and monsters.<sup>21</sup> The impulse to compare the things of the newly discovered West Indies with such information as could be found about sub-Saharan Africa and the extended basin of the Indian Ocean in sources like Strabo's *Geography* (1st century BCE) and the Elder Pliny's *Natural History* (1st century CE) would continue to run deep with later naturalists to the New World, not least with Fernández de Oviedo and Las Casas. It is precisely the *ontological* link between the traditional Afro-Indian tropics and the lands discovered by Columbus in the high Atlantic that compels Las Casas, despite the fact that a huge ocean was now known to separate the Americas from Asia, to argue that the West Indies were merely the easternmost reaches of the traditional extra-Gangetic India – as Las Casas puts it in the *Apologética*, 'the West Indies are a part of East India'.<sup>22</sup> Las Casas obviously understood that Columbus might have erred in thinking himself a mere ten-day journey from the Ganges, but as a *naturalist* Columbus had not erred in conflating his Indies with the legendary India.

The Indies enterprise had been forged between inimical explanations about how earth and water were lodged at the center of the cosmos and about how life was allocated in the region of the elements.<sup>23</sup> One geocentric model, upheld by those who doubted the possibility of fording the ocean between the ends of east and west, explained the presence of dry land as the result of a displacement of the sphere of water with respect to the sphere of the earth, so that the continental masses – Africa, Asia, and Europe – would have been huddled together in the form of a singular island surrounded by an otherwise abyssal watery globe. This is precisely the model suggested by the

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<sup>21</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 7.2.21, ed. H. Rackham et al. [Loeb Classical Library 330, 352, 353, 370, 371, 392–394, 418, 419] (Cambridge, Mass.: 1938–1963).

<sup>22</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* I, 377–383.

<sup>23</sup> For an analysis of the plan Columbus appears to have concocted during his early years in Portugal and Castile, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 107–158.

celebrated T-O *mappaemundi*, which depicted a disk-shaped island divided into the three known continents by the T-shaped arrangement of the Mediterranean Sea and the rivers Nile and Tanais, and entirely surrounded by ocean [Fig. 5].

An alternative geocentric model, evidently upheld by Columbus and his supporters, visualized the sphere of water as concentric with respect to the sphere of the earth, explaining dry land as the result of imperfections on the earth's sphere that – physical and geometrical balance preserved – were expected to repeat themselves all around the globe. This meant that the landmass conformed by Africa, Asia, and

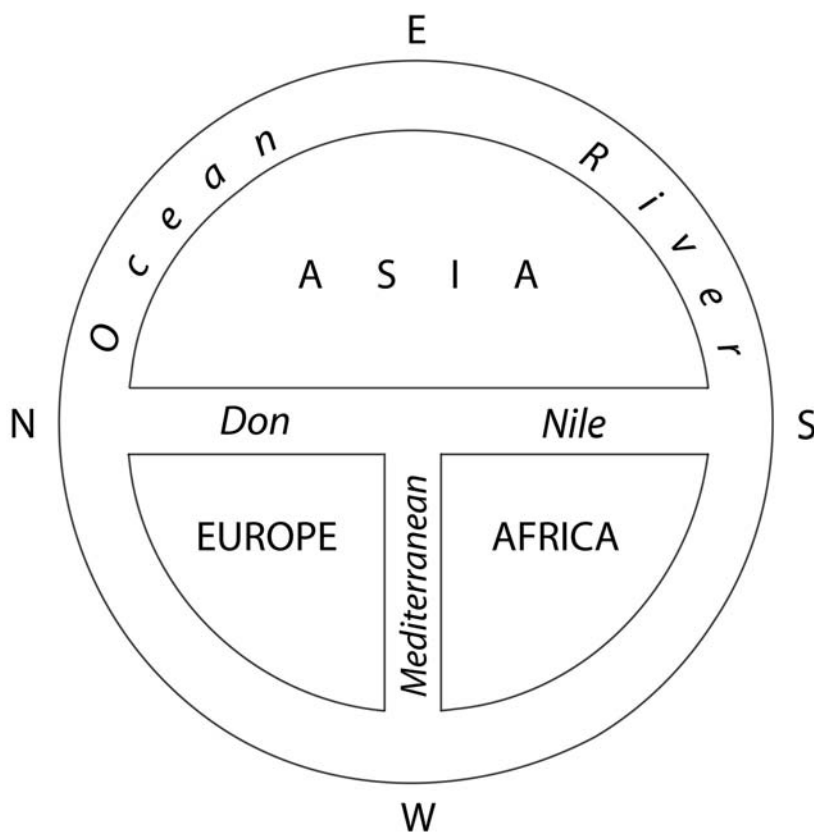


Fig. 5. The tripartite structure of T-O maps. From D. Woodward, “*Map-paemundi*”, in J.B. Harley and D. Woodward, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe* [...] (Chicago: 1987), 297. Image © The University of Chicago Press.



Europe extended much farther in latitude and longitude than allowed by models of the *oikoumene* such as that of Eratosthenes, as one sees for example on Behaim's globe, which depicts the discoveries of the Portuguese along Atlantic Africa all the way across the tropics to just beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and greatly exaggerates the east-west span of the continental masses between the Canaries and Japan. Alternately, it meant that Africa, Asia, and Europe did not configure the only landmass on the globe, as one sees in editions of Macrobius's popular early-fifth-century epitome of Neoplatonism, *Commentarium in somnium Scipionis*, which theorizes an inaccurately labeled *antipodal* landmass in the southern temperate zone [Fig. 6]. In like manner,



Fig. 6. Macrobius's zonal *mappamundi*. From Macrobius, *In somnium Scipionis expositio: Saturnalia* (Brescia, Boninus de Boninis: 1483), fol. viii v. Image © John Hay Library, Providence, Rhode Island.

Behaim's globe depicts an ocean dotted by islands all the way from the end of Europe and Africa to the end of Asia.

As for the distribution of life itself, the Indies enterprise had been forged between antithetical perceptions of the tropics. The traditional theory of the *five zones* today attributed to Parmenides (5th c. BCE) is here illustrated by Columbus's favorite source, Pierre d'Ailly's *Ymago mundi* (written 1410). This influential theory divided the region of the elements in relation to the sun's yearly advance and retreat along the slanted circle of the ecliptic, with the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn marking the sun's maximal declination to the north and to the south of the equatorial circle, and the Arctic and Antarctic circles marking the corresponding declination of the ecliptical or zodiacal pole [Fig. 7]. By this latitudinal division of the world, the two 'cold' zones

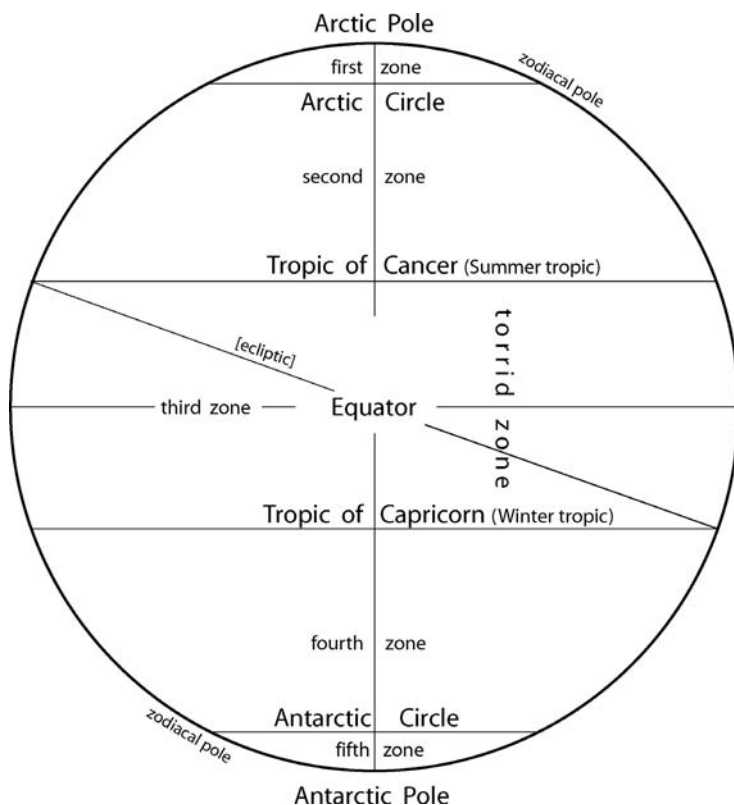


Fig. 7. Zonal *mappamundi*. Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson, (Louvain, Johann of Paderborn: 1480–1483) fol. 3 r.

beyond the Arctic and Antarctic circles (*first zone* and *fifth zone*) were inhospitable on account of the relative absence of the sun's heat (in today's terms, the sun's rays measured at noon on either equinox fall ever more *obliquely* to the ground as one approaches either pole). The 'hot' zone between Cancer and Capricorn (*third zone*) would have also been inhospitable on account of the relative excess of the sun's heat (in today's terms, the sun's rays measured at noon on either equinox fall ever more *perpendicularly* to the ground as one approaches the equator), whereas the two zones between each tropic and its corresponding polar circle (*second zone* and *fourth zone*) would have been hospitable thanks to the alternate excess and defect of heat caused by the sun's yearly advance and retreat along the slanted ecliptic.

Let us briefly restate this theory's views of the belt of the tropics in terms of the optical principles that one of Las Casas's key sources in the *Apologética*, Albertus Magnus, had long adopted in the service of natural philosophy for the theoretical geography we know today as *De natura loci* (*On the Nature of Place*, ca. 1251–1254). To begin with, one must bear in mind that the sun's rays measured at noon *always* fall perpendicularly *somewhere* on the belt of the tropics. More precisely, for any given point between Cancer and Capricorn, the sun's rays fall perpendicularly on the surface of the globe twice a year at noon – once as the sun transits along the slanted ecliptic on its way north, and a second time on its way south. As Albertus Magnus explains, the belt of the tropics could have easily been construed as 'scorched', for the sun's rays falling perpendicularly on that region's ocean waters grew 'combustive' upon being reflected onto themselves.<sup>24</sup> The combustive action of these concentrated rays would have rendered the tropical ocean unnavigable and its shores uninhabitable, especially because the outline of waters and shores would have formed a sort of concave mirror that concentrated the sun's rays to a deadly degree.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Albertus Magnus, *De natura loci* 1.6, in Hossfeld P. – Geyer B. (eds.), *Alberti Magni opera omnia* 5.2 (Münster: 1980) 9, lines 70–73. All translations from this work are my own.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1.6, 9, lines 77–81. This claim may issue from Pseudo-Euclid's *Catoptrica* 32, which treats the combustive effect of the sun's rays converging on the focus point of concave mirrors. Fire is kindled by concave mirrors that face the sun; see Takahashi K. (ed. and trans.), *The Medieval Translations of Euclid's "Catoptrica"* (Japan: 1992) 194–199. The Oxford Franciscan Roger Bacon examines this problem in *De speculis comburentibus*; see Lindberg D.C., *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature: A Critical Edition, with English Translation, Introduction, and Notes, of "De multiplicatione specierum" and "De speculis comburentibus"* (South Bend, Ind.: 1998) 271–341.

Albertus Magnus and his successor Las Casas ultimately rejected the claim made by the theory of the five zones that the tropics largely constituted a wasteland, in favor of the claim that it was *universally* hospitable. But Las Casas pushes Albertus Magnus's unconventional claim one crucial step further in the *Apologética*: Las Casas also rejects the corollaries that usually accompanied the theory of the five zones concerning the nature of tropical peoples. For if the tropics configured a generally temperate, fertile, and inhabitable belt of the globe, tropics themselves could not possibly possess the nature long imputed to the inhabitants of hot places around the globe.

By the theory of the five zones, the inhabited world known prior to the process of expansion we know as the Age of Exploration would have constituted a narrow *temperate* and, by extension, *civilized* corridor of the geographical system composed by Africa, Asia, and Europe, besieged to the north and to the south by the extreme cold and heat of the *uncivilized* Arctic and tropics. Sub-Saharan Africa and the extended basin of the Indian Ocean were conventionally visualized as the hostile fringes of the world (Macrobius's *mappamundi*, for example, shows Ethiopia, the Arabian Peninsula [which is bounded by the *mare rubrum* or Red Sea], and India as extending into the tropical belt labeled *perusta* or scorched). The unrelenting heat of the tropics was supposed to forge the precious metals and stones coveted in Mediterranean markets, and only geographical accidents like the Nile or the Ganges occasionally compelled a nature circumstantially overflowing with heat and moisture – life's primary ingredients – to generate the plant, animal, and human marvels and monsters that had long captivated Mediterranean geographers. To be sure, tropics themselves were considered human, but they were humans outside the parameters of ordinary nature and living reminders of nature's quirks or God's omnipotence. As one reads in Pliny's *Natural History*, the work after which Fernández de Oviedo and Las Casas modeled their own *naturalia*, the monstrous races of Ethiopia and India 'have been made by the ingenuity of nature as toys for herself and marvels for us'.<sup>26</sup> Saint Augustine's Christian sequel to this view in *De civitate dei* (413–426) ventured that the monstrous races described by Pliny at world's end not only descended from Adam and Eve but also had been fashioned by God's inscrutable wisdom, perhaps precisely to show humankind that even monsters sometimes born in its midst – twins, for example – were not at all the accidental

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<sup>26</sup> Pliny, *Natural History* VII,2,32.

offspring of a 'less than perfect Artificer'.<sup>27</sup> One of Las Casas's medical sources in the *Apologética*, Haly, in his tenth-century commentary on Ptolemy's astrological *Tetrabiblos* (2nd century CE), invokes a now lost hermetic text in order to claim that the excessive cold and heat of extreme places adulterated sperm, so that the inhabitants at the very ends of the north and the south, in Las Casas's paraphrase, were born 'with corrupted faces and countenances, ugly and turpid to the greatest degree, and thus their customs are also evil and appalling, their internal faculties perturbed, and their understanding bestial'.<sup>28</sup> Yet no one loomed larger than Aristotle in defining and explaining nature, and it was one of his most prolific and able commentators, Averroës (1126–1198), who epitomized the conventional wisdom concerning life in the tropics. Discussing Aristotle's exposition of the theory of the five zones in the *Meteorologica*, the Cordovan philosopher admitted that life in the torrid zone *was* conceivable, but the heat in those latitudes where the sun rose directly overhead abnormally accelerated the life cycles of all things, so that even humans lived short lives, which meant that they were 'not natural' (because, in a sense, such humans ripened and spoiled much faster than others).<sup>29</sup> The temperaments of Ethiopians, who were born in those latitudes only 'by accident', deviated from the human norm and, therefore, so did their 'way of life'. Not surprisingly, Averroës offers Ethiopians as prime examples of life's monstrous exceptionality in tropical latitudes, 'for *their life is non-natural*, and their temperaments deviate greatly from human temperaments. And *they live in that place only by accident*, that is, when there is a cave where they dwell, just as other animals make their dwellings in the hollows of mountains or in the waters. And moreover, *in their way of life in these matters which are beyond nature*, they are found to resemble those who live at the limit of the habitable world, to the north'.<sup>30</sup> In sum, only *per accidens* did extreme places like the tropics generate life; and wherever that life included people, their physiology and psychology were abnormal, and so too were their *mores* or customs. Indeed, tropical nature was a mother *by exception*, and her children biological and moral nothing less

<sup>27</sup> Saint Augustine, *City of God* XVI.8, ed. and trans. W.M. Green [Loeb Classical Library] (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957–1972) 411–417.

<sup>28</sup> See Las Casas, *Apologética* 29, I, 411; and Ptolemy, *Liber quadripartiti Ptholomei* (Venice, Bonetus Locatellus for Octavianus Scotus: 1493) fol. 31 r.

<sup>29</sup> Averroës, *Meteorologicorum*, in *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* 5 (Venice, Juncas: 1562; facsimile reproduction, Frankfurt am Main: 1962) fols. 400 r; 487 v; this information on fol. 438 v H–I.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 440 v G–H. Emphasis mine.

than aberrants, deviants gnawing away at the fringes of the civilized world. This view would easily come to be projected onto the New World itself, where Europeans claimed to witness cultural ‘anomalies’ of the most diverse sort – from idolatry and human sacrifice, to tyranny, incest, sodomy, and even eating disorders that included the consumption of ‘low’ creatures like reptiles and insects, the ritual consumption of human flesh.

But a rather different view of the geographical extent of life on the globe had long contended that the tropics were *not* the desolate fringes of the inhabited world. A variant of the theory of the five zones – rooted in the lost theoretical works of authors such as Eratosthenes, the Roman historian Polybius (2nd century BC), and the Stoic Posidonius (1st century BC), and endorsed by Ptolemy (2nd century AD), Avicenna (10th–11th century AD), and other influential authors – explained the glaring hyperproductivity of tropical lands not as nature’s accidents and immoderacies, but as part of nature’s *general* design.<sup>31</sup> According to this variant of the five zones, the tropics were a *universally* hyperproductive and surprisingly *temperate* part of the globe. Columbus had at the very least stumbled upon this learned tradition by way of geographical compendia such as d’Ailly’s *Ymago mundi* and the *Historia rerum ubique gestarum* by the humanist pope Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II), and it would now come to inform Las Casas’s *Apologética* largely by way of Albertus Magnus’s *De natura loci*.<sup>32</sup> Curiously enough, it had taken rather a long time for experience to catch up with the wisdom of books when it came

<sup>31</sup> For this variant of the theory of the five zones, see Strabo’s *Geography* II,1,1–3,8, esp. II,3,2, which includes a discussion of Eratosthenes’s *Geography*, Polybius’s *The Inhabited World below the Equator*, and Posidonius’s *The Ocean*. I have consulted the edition by H.L. Jones [Loeb Classical Library] (Cambridge, Mass.: 1917–1932) 49, 50, 182, 192, 211, 223, 241, 267. The authorities most often cited by Latin Aristotelians in favor of this variant were Geminus of Rhodes’ *Introduction to the Phenomena* XVI,21–38, which was misattributed to Ptolemy, Ptolemy’s own *Almagest* II,6, Avicenna’s *Canon of Medicine* I,1,3,34, and perhaps Avicenna’s *De animalibus*. I have consulted, respectively, *Geminus: Introduction aux phénomènes*, ed. and trans. G. Aujac (Paris: 1975); *Ptolemy’s “Almagest”*, ed. and trans. G.J. Toomer (Princeton: 1998); *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna*, ed. and trans. O.C. Gruner (London: 1930); and *Avicenne perhyapatetici philosophi ac medicorum facile primi Opera*, ed. Caecilius Fabrianensis (Venice, Bonetus Locatellus for Octavianus Scotus: 1508; reprint Frankfurt am Main: 1961) fols. 29r–64r, specifically, fols. 44v–45r.

<sup>32</sup> On Columbus’s contact with this learned tradition, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 234–235; as well as Columbus’s postils 18, 19, and 673 to Ailly and Gerson, *Ymago mundi* 12r, and 78v, respectively; and postils 22a and b to Enea Silvio Piccolomini [Pope Pius II], *Historia rerum*: *Cuyo original se encuentra en la Biblioteca Colombina de Sevilla* (Venice, Johannes of Cologne – Johannes Manthen: 1477; facsimile edition Madrid: 1991) fol. 3v.

to precipitating the physical process of expansion in the Atlantic. The great pioneers of exploration in Atlantic Africa and the Bahamas and Caribbean Basin – the scholar prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460) and the Discoverer himself – had squandered many years of their illustrious careers attempting to persuade their immediate contemporaries that one could enter the dreaded torrid zone in hope of finding hugely habitable lands, rather than impassable deserts and trackless oceans. Henry's sailors had simply refused for years to round the frothy waters of Cape Bojador across from the Canaries (today, Cape Juby); and Columbus himself had never ultimately managed to persuade the council in charge of evaluating his project in Castile that he could find land across the Atlantic in the same latitudes as Guinea.

Nevertheless, in the course of little more than a century – from Portugal's taking control of the North African port of Ceuta in 1415 to Juan Sebastián El Cano's completing the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1522 – Mediterranean Europe would appear to have reached the problematic realization that it was only the northern neighbor to a vast and immensely rich and populous world to the south.<sup>33</sup> By the time of Columbus's death, the tenets of the theory of the five zones had certainly begun to erode. One need only consult Martin Waldseemüller's justly famous *Cosmographiae introductio* (1507) to appreciate the degree to which changing perceptions of the belt of the tropics had already crossed the Pyrenees into northern Europe. In light of the new discoveries, Waldseemüller was willing to claim that the so-called torrid zone was habitable after all, even if 'with difficulty'.<sup>34</sup> The main caption of the companion *mappamundi* that mentions America for the first time proudly observed that the 'land discovered by great and exceedingly worthy men, Columbus, Captain of the King of Castile, and Amerigo Vespuccio', extends 'under the circuit and path of the sun between the tropics' [Fig. 8].<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 51–53.

<sup>34</sup> Waldseemüller Martin, *The 'Cosmographiae Introductio' of Martin Waldseemüller in Facsimile* (1507), ed. C.G. Herbermann, trans. J. Fischer – F. von Vieser (New York: 1907) 47.

<sup>35</sup> Translation by R. Mac Donald. The best analysis of this map, and of the process by which Waldseemüller and his colleagues came to introduce the name America, appears in Johnson C.R., "Renaissance German Cosmographers and the Naming of America", *Past and Present* 191 (2006) 3–43. For this author's assessment of the effect of the new discoveries in Germany, see *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and the Marvelous* [Studies in Early Modern German History] (Charlottesville: 2008).



Fig. 8. Martin Waldseemüller, *Mappamundi*, 1507. Woodcut. Courtesy of the Map Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



Ironically, the America known to Waldseemüller and his colleagues had little to do with the continent we now visualize as stretching from pole to pole across the Atlantic from Europe and Africa. On the map now housed in the Library of Congress, America is nothing more *or less* than the quasi-antipodal landmass discovered by Columbus on his third voyage and later explored by his friend Amerigo (i.e., South America). And in the minds of the German cartographers, this considerable landmass shared the belt of the tropics with the newly explored territories in sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. Indeed, it would appear that the map's pseudo-cordiform projection deliberately minimizes Europe's scale in order to emphasize a herculean 'new' landscape girdling the globe's monstrous belly to the south. By the time Ferdinand Magellan and El Cano launched the *Victoria's* celebrated circumnavigation of the globe, the Spanish explorer and colonial officer Martín Fernández de Enciso (about 1469–1530) had come to define the *Indias Occidentales* as a vast tropical expanse *to the west and to the south* of El Hierro Island in the Canaries (*al Poniente [...] al Mediodía*).<sup>36</sup> Fernández de Enciso's foundational *Suma de geographia* (1519) observed that the exploration carried out under Castile and Aragon to the sizeable 'Indies, Terra Firma, and Western Isles' had put to shame those 'astrologers' who believed the torrid zone to be inhospitable. Knowing as the ancients did – continues the author – that the recently explored regions of Ethiopia, Arabia Felix, Calicut, and Melaka configured vast and densely populated parts of the tropical belt, how could anyone have erred so grossly in its characterization?<sup>37</sup> Needless to say, numerous historians and cosmographers who in the course of the sixteenth century would bear witness to the early phases of European expansion – first in Atlantic Africa, then in the Americas and the extended basin of the Indian Ocean, and finally in the Pacific Ocean – similarly praised the 'moderns' for overturning ancient prejudices concerning the torrid zone. Not least among them was Las Casas: *Historia de las Indias* celebrates the Indies enterprise as part of a providential plan to offer the option of Christian salvation to the unexpectedly innumerable inhabitants of the torrid zone (though not as a charter for colonization or slavery); and the companion *Apologética*

<sup>36</sup> Fernández de Enciso M., *Suma de geographia* (Seville, n.p.: 1519) fols. g vi v – g vii r. Translations from this work are my own.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. a iii v.

tests American nature in light of the learned theorization of a vastly hyperproductive tropics as the groundwork for an apology of Amerindian culture.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, as Las Casas well knew, the revelation of a not-at-all-torrid zone had not automatically compelled Europeans to relinquish the view of the tropics as a hellish hinterland in favor of the view of the tropics as life's Edenic incubator. These inimical views of the tropics had remained paradoxically at play in Columbus's foundational testimony of the Bahamas and Caribbean Basin. The Discoverer had been keenly aware that all lands and waters he proceeded to explore beyond the island of San Salvador (a landfall he mindfully located on the same parallel as El Hierro island) fell toward and beyond the tropic of Cancer. His *Diary* and letters stubbornly insisted, against those who had mocked his enterprise back in Castile, that the territories newly found in the high Atlantic were not only prolific and populous to an unthinkable degree, but also more generally temperate than even the Discoverer had envisioned.<sup>39</sup> And yet, even as Columbus continued to marvel at the sublime profligacy of the tropics, he also refused to relinquish the view that its peoples were the aberrant creatures tradition had placed in the cold and hot extremes of the Arctic and tropics. Columbus's exploration of the Bahamas, northeastern Cuba, and northern Hispaniola on his first voyage may not have

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<sup>38</sup> On Columbus's plan to venture into the belt of the tropics, see Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* 1.1.2.6–7, I, 371–370. As for Las Casas's testimony of the temperateness, fertility, and inhabitability of the Indies, I am following chaps 1–45 of the *Apologética* I, 287–492. Other historians and cosmographers whose works attest to a changing perception of the tropics include Martyr d'Anghiera Pietro, *De orbe novo* (Alcalá de Henares, Miguel de Eguia: 1530) fol. cxvii r; Martín Cortés y Albarac M., *Breve compendio de la sphaera y de la arte de nauegar* (Seville, Anton Alvarez: 1551), in *Obras clásicas de náutica y navegación*, ed. J.I. González-Aller Hierro, CD-ROM [Colección Clásicos Tavera, 2nd ser., Temáticas para la historia de Iberoamérica 17] (Madrid: 1998) fols. xx v–xxii r; López de Gómara Francisco, *Historia general de las Indias* (Zaragoza, Agustin Millan: 1552; reprint Caracas: 1979) 14; García de Palacio D., *Instrucion nauthica* (Mexico City, Pedro Ocharte: 1587) in *Obras clásicas de náutica y navegación* fol. 11v; Acosta J. de, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Seville, Iuan de Leon: 1590; facsimile ed., Madrid: 1998) 85–115; Herrera y Tordesillas A., *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del mar océano*, 4 vols. (Madrid, Imprenta Real: 1600–1615; reprint Madrid: 1991) I, 264; Syria P. de, *Arte de la verdadera navegación* (Valencia, Juan Chrysotomo Garriz: 1602), in *Obras clásicas de náutica y navegación* 18–21; and Nájera A. de, *Navegacion especulativa, y pratica* (Lisbon, Pedro Craesbeeck: 1628), in *Obras clásicas de náutica y navegación* fol. 4v.

<sup>39</sup> On Columbus's testimony of the temperateness, fertility, and inhabitability of his Indies, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 211–228 and 393–434.

yielded the ‘monsters’ long associated with the Afro-Indian tropics. But it had yielded, as one reads in his very letter to Luis de Santán-gel, childlike islanders of ‘very subtle ingenuity’ (*muy sutil ingenio*), and so ‘marvelously timorous’ (*temerosos a maravilla*) that upon setting eyes on the Admiral’s modest armada they tended to flee ‘so quickly that parents did not wait for their children’ – the people today known as *taínos*.<sup>40</sup> And, while the skin hue of islanders had failed to darken as Columbus southed his way from San Salvador toward Cuba and Hispaniola to the ‘black’ color Europeans took to be the mark of tropical monstrosity along the same latitudes in Guinea, Columbus had imagined his Indian informants telling him that ‘far from there, dwelled one-eyed men, and others with dogs’ snouts who ate men, and who, upon capturing someone, would disembowel him and drink his blood and slice off his genitals’.<sup>41</sup> Not surprisingly, in the absence of ‘black’ slaves, Columbus had by the end of this voyage yielded to the substitutional illusion that the lower latitudes of the Caribbean must yield a race of monsters – the peoples today known as *caribes*. The ‘greater ingenuity’ of these peoples supposedly enabled them to hunt down and capture the previous islanders, while their similarly greater ‘cowardice’ compelled them to visit unspeakable cruelties on their captives (namely, farming them in order to kill them and eat their flesh), so Columbus reasoned that they ought to pay for their crimes against nature as empire’s slaves.<sup>42</sup> Columbus’s Indians had remained, by his influential testimony, either childish or monstrous humans whose liminal nature seemed to justify rendering them Spain’s subjects or slaves. In effect, even as the belt of the tropics would appear to have been gradually displacing Mediterranean Europe as the uniquely temperate and, thereby, civilized center of the inhabited world, Columbus and his ideological heirs in the Spanish empire had insisted on construing tropical peoples as Europe’s moral periphery.

No one understood the need to address this paradox inherent to imperial ideology as lucidly or urgently as Las Casas. In *Historia de*

<sup>40</sup> On the timidity of the islanders, see Pérez de Tudela y Bueso et al., *Colección documental del Descubrimiento*, I, 251; and on their ingenuity, see *ibid.*, I, 252.

<sup>41</sup> See the entry for 4 November 1493 in Columbus’s *diario*, in *ibid.*, I, 142.

<sup>42</sup> On the ‘cowardice’ of the predators later known as *caribes*, see Columbus’s *carta-relación* to Fernando and Isabel on his return passage to Europe in 1493 (*ibid.*, I, 278); and on their ‘greater ingenuity’, see the entry for 5 December 1492 in the *diario* (*ibid.*, I, 165). For a full account of Columbus’s influential portrayal of *taínos* and *caribes*, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 404–434.

*las Indias*, Las Casas exploits Columbus's Edenic testimony about the Indies, which functions as a prelude for the case presented in the *Apologética* for the *universal* inhabitability of the Indies. Las Casas reads such eye-witness evidence as overwhelmingly inconsistent with the political lessons Columbus and his ideological heirs in the empire had been willing to draw from their encounter with the peoples of the tropics. Columbus's insistence on the *intelligent* but *pusillanimous* nature of the Indians had its clearest model in a widely commented passage of Aristotle's *Politics*, that conveniently complemented the theory of the five zones. According to Aristotle:

Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. *Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive* [i.e., ingenious], *but they are wanting in spirit* [i.e., cowardly], *and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery*. But the Hellenic race, which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent. Hence it continues free, and is the best-governed of any nation, and if it could be formed into one state, would be able to rule the world.<sup>43</sup>

This geopolitical model had reached Columbus by way of compendia like d'Ailly's *Imago mundi*, and it was subsequently utilized by crown apologists, most prominently Sepúlveda, who also consulted such authoritative sources as Thomas Aquinas's thirteenth-century commentaries to the *Politics* and his disciple Ptolemy of Lucca's mirror of princes, *De regimine principum*.<sup>44</sup>

One is tempted to dismiss Aristotle's tripartite geopolitics as a mere stereotype by which imperialist bullies justified their trespasses against other nations. But Las Casas perfectly understood that this model had its roots in formative philosophical discussions concerning the problematic relation of rational soul to physical body. And by the time this model had snowballed into the hands of apologists such as Sepúlveda, it was already tightly packed within a philosophical and technical system that explicitly linked concepts of place – a subject of commentary in

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* VII,7,1327b 24–34.

<sup>44</sup> See Columbus's postils 49 and 866 to Ailly and Gerson, *Imago mundi* 16r and 151v, respectively. For Sepúlveda's sources, see Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio* VII,1,5,968–1127, 361–364; and Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers: "De regimine principum"* (Philadelphia: 1997) II,1,5 105.

the realm of physics – with political theory.<sup>45</sup> This system included disciplines such as theology, physics, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, astrology, optics itself, the psychology and physiology of humans, beasts, and plants, and, of course, those branches of moral philosophy we know today as ethics, economics, and politics. The cosmology Latin Aristotelians had inherited largely from the Greeks and Arabs maintained that in the physical world, celestial bodies, by means of light and other forms of radiation, conveyed form and thereby motion to the four elements and their compounds, not only affecting the body's humors but even shaping human behavior.

The theory of natural diversity invoked by Las Casas in the *Apologética* hinged on the geometrical optics that Albertus Magnus and other early Latin Aristotelians such as his learned contemporaries Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon appear largely to have culled from the magical treatise *De radiis stellarum* (*On the Rays of Stars*) by the Arab world's first prominent Aristotelian al-Kindī (died about 870).<sup>46</sup> Al-Kindī's *De radiis* can be said to have played a significant role in Latin Aristotelianism's early abandonment of Aristotle's own concept of nature as an intrinsic ability of bodies to be moved or changed, in favor of the concept derived from thinkers such as Plato and Plotinus that a thing's nature ultimately 'emanated' downward from the Good.<sup>47</sup> As Las Casas understood it, celestial bodies exerted their influence on lower bodies by two means (*medios*): 'one is their rays and the other the containing place, which is called continent because it contains or comprehends in itself those things that are generated – just as earth does for men and beasts, air for birds, or water for fish'.<sup>48</sup> Las Casas's theory of rays obeyed a few simple optical principles: every celestial body communicated a unique *virtue* or property by means of its rays (in the case of the sun, for instance, it would have been primarily heat). The degree of communication between any radiating body and its object was a function,

<sup>45</sup> For a detailed account of the workings of this epistemic system, see Wey Gómez's treatment of Albertus Magnus's *De natura loci* in *The Tropics of Empire* 229–292.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 262–269. My work on the geometrical optics in Las Casas's *Apologética* and in Albertus Magnus's *De natura loci* is indebted to Lindberg's treatment of the metaphysical tradition that reached Albertus Magnus's contemporary Roger Bacon by way of authors like al-Kindī. See Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature* xxxv–liii. For al-Kindī's treatise, see d'Alverny M.T. – F. Hudry (eds.), "Al-Kindī: *De radiis*", *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 49 (1974) 139–260.

<sup>47</sup> Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 260–269.

<sup>48</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 24, I, 389.

among other things, of the *distance* between them, of the *angle* at which rays fell on that object, of the *timespan* of exposure to those rays, and, finally, of the *properties* of the preadjacent matter in the object itself.<sup>49</sup> The smaller the distance, the stronger the rays; the greater the distance, the weaker the rays. The more perpendicular the angle, the stronger the rays; the more oblique the angle, the weaker the rays. The longer the timespan, the greater the effect conveyed; the shorter the timespan, the weaker the effect. Lastly, this effect also depended on a given object's ability to reflect, absorb, or refract rays.

As Las Casas explains, following Albertus Magnus, each point in the region of the elements and, by extension, each *place* was the center of a unique horizon with its own array of stars and planets, and the complex of rays from this unique celestial configuration converged on that point to convey properties that it shared with no other point, no matter how near that other point might be.<sup>50</sup> As evidence for the uniqueness that each place in nature conveyed to the things so placed, Las Casas explains that 'when we take a plant or a lettuce along with all its roots and surrounding soil and transplant it no farther than ten feet away from there, it wilts and languishes until, bit by bit, it assimilates the properties of the other place to which it was transplanted and, once assimilated, those properties bring it back to life; and the cause for this is no other than the difference in the properties of the two locations, despite their being so close to one another'.<sup>51</sup> Obviously, similar places brought forth similar natures, and different places, especially places separated by *latitude*, brought forth different natures, but every place under the heavens conveyed a nature unique to the things so placed. Moreover, as the heavens moved across any given horizon, one configuration of celestial bodies gave way to another, and the complex of rays bearing down on the place at the center of that horizon also changed, causing all creatures animal, vegetal, and mineral in that place to mutate constantly and thereby to behave in changing ways.<sup>52</sup> In sum, every place at every point in time was thought to generate a thing that was unique to that place and yet was constantly being

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<sup>49</sup> I am largely following the optical principles developed by Robert Grosseteste, "De lineis, angulis, et figuris seu de fractionibus et reflexionibus radiorum", doc. 9 in Baur L. (ed.), *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste* [Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 9] (Münster: 1912) 59–65.

<sup>50</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 24, I, 387.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 388.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 387–388.

somehow altered or mutating into something else altogether. As Las Casas reminds his readers, these tenets were to be sufficient to account for the vast diversity and constant flux visible in *all* things natural, as also for the variety and mutability in the 'properties and customs' of peoples across the globe. All such changes occurred 'on account of the variation or mutation of this or that *aspect* and *figure* of the heavens'.<sup>53</sup>

In sum, knowledge of place under the heavens revealed the causes for the motion and change of all physical bodies, as well as the complex conduct of rational creatures. Aristotelians concerned with those aspects of astrological thought that might run contrary to the doctrine that Christian salvation was achieved by exercising free will were quick to point out that celestial bodies predisposed but did not compel humans to act in accordance with their natures. By Las Casas's watchful qualification in the *Apologética*, celestial bodies, *qua* physical creatures, could *not* directly affect immaterial entities such as the soul, only other physical bodies below them in the cosmic chain of causation, 'but celestial bodies may cause something indirectly in the soul, for by exerting greater or lesser, better or worse influence on the physical body, they render it more or less well-disposed to receive the soul in itself'.<sup>54</sup> So, to the extent that humans individually and collectively yielded to the nature induced in them by the heavens, their behavior was a function of place. What had come to worry those learned apologists who resurrected the theory of natural slavery to justify the subjection of the Indians was precisely the human soul's ability or inability to harness the nature that places, cold, hot, or temperate, communicated to the body.

According to this explanatory system, the humor associated with degrees of intelligence and spiritedness in humans was blood. Las Casas's medical sources in this section of the *Apologética* include the Hippocratic *Airs, Waters, and Places* (4th century BC), Haly's commentary to Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*, and, of course, Albertus Magnus's own *De natura loci*.<sup>55</sup> The cold in the Arctic regions was supposed to close down the body's pores, trapping vital heat in the blood. This vital heat explained the *spiritedness* or what Las Casas

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., I, 388.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 23, I, 381–383; this quote, 382.

<sup>55</sup> For the foundational medical treatise known as *Airs, Waters, Places*, I have consulted Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places*, in Jones W.H.S. (ed. and trans.), *Hippocrates I* [Loeb Classical Library] (Cambridge, Mass.: 1984) 65–137.

terms the ‘animosity’ (*animosidad*) of Nordic peoples.<sup>56</sup> But the closing of the body’s pores simultaneously prevented the blood’s purification, which in some sense muddled the *spiritus* or pneuma – the noblest, most rarified substance in the blood that acted as a link between soul and body. The *spiritus* was thought to act as a sort of two-way antenna between soul and body – the means by which soul breathed life into the body, but also the means by which the body communicated the ‘forms’ or ‘images’ or ‘likenesses’ of the sensible world to the rational soul. The ‘thickening’ of the blood and the ‘muddling’ of the *spiritus* explained the stupidity of Nordic peoples, or as Las Casas phrases it, ‘why they cannot display ingenuity or intellect or impeccable reasoning’. On the other hand, the heat in the tropics was supposed to open the pores, subtracting vital heat from the body, which explained why the inhabitants of ‘that region toward the south near to the sun’s path’ were ‘timid, cowardly, and lacking in spiritedness’.<sup>57</sup> But the opening of the body’s pores also caused blood to be purified, which in turn refined the *spiritus* that did remain in the blood. The ‘thinning out’ of the blood and the ‘refining’ of the *spiritus* explained why tropicals were ‘intellective, ingenious, skillful, and more naturally disposed toward works of reason than any other nations’.<sup>58</sup> Even at the risk of appearing all too keen on the case this tripartite model made for the intelligence and lack of spiritedness of tropicals, Las Casas did not miss an opportunity to attenuate the vices of excess and defect (fruitless ingenuity and hopeless cowardice) that might conventionally be thought to apply to his Indians. He adds to this model the qualification that the peoples who inhabit hot, but still markedly temperate, lands (*tierras cálidas templadas*) are:

sober and tempered in their eating habits, and in drinking, and in all their other acts moderate and measured, not ferocious or audacious, nor peoples who are too full of themselves. On the contrary, they are afraid of erring and thereby incurring some inconvenience. This is due to the [purification of the blood] and the subtraction of body heat caused by the heat in that region, which cools and tempers the *spiritus* (*los espíritus*) in the said manner; so that they become timid *in a certain sense* and less ferocious, and thus they are more still and, thereby, more cautious;

<sup>56</sup> Las Casas, *Apologetica* 24, I, 385.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., I, 385–386.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., I, 386.



they investigate and enquire into things and their consequences more fully, and therefore they become wiser, because quietude, tranquility, and enquiry are essential for wisdom.<sup>59</sup>

As for the qualities of human blood in temperate places such as Mediterranean Europe, the model culled by Las Casas from his sources predictably claimed that this humor possessed just the right temperature and purity levels. The middling of these qualities between the hot and the cold, and between the thick and the thin, explained the intelligence and spiritedness that was supposed to have characterized first the Greeks, later the Romans, and, as crown apologists had argued in a modern era of European expansion, most of all the Spaniards.

The steadfast connection this model drew between geographical middling and moral moderation was indebted to Aristotle's discussion of moral virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which for Aristotle concerned moderation relative to excess and to defect.<sup>60</sup> Aristotle had used this very moral formula in the *Politics* for his influential geopolitical distinction between the 'civilized' Greeks and the 'barbarians' of a cold Europe and a hot Asia. The alleged *intelligence* of Greeks evidently middled between the sheer stupidity of Europeans and the frivolous shrewdness of Asians. The alleged *spiritedness* of the Greeks middled between the misdirected boldness of Europeans and the irredeemable cowardice of Asians. By implication, the Greeks also displayed *moderation* in the body's appetites, evidently middling between the tyrannical repressiveness of Europeans and the consumptive self-indulgence of Asians. Aristotle owed his claims for the moral superiority of Greeks over Europeans and Asians to Plato's discussion in the *Republic* of the attributes of the well-ordered city and the well-ordered human soul.<sup>61</sup> In Plato's tripartite soul, and, by extension, in Plato's *polis*, 'calculation' (*logismos*) was supposed to summon 'spiritedness' (*thumos*) against 'appetite' (*epithumia*) – or, if you will, reason was supposed to summon will power against depredation by instinct. Such was the magic formula behind the exercise of prudence and the dispensation of justice.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., I, 386–387; emphasis mine.

<sup>60</sup> See Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 285–288; and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II,8,1108b 10–25. I have consulted the translation by W.D. Ross and J.O. Urmson, in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* II, 1729–1867.

<sup>61</sup> Plato, *Republic* IV,427c–445e, in Bloom A. (ed. and trans.), *The Republic of Plato* (New York: 1991).

As Las Casas very well understood, Aristotle's case against Europe's and Asia's 'barbarians' had ultimately afforded modern advocates of empire such as Sepúlveda the compelling argument that Indians were humans, yes, but humans unable to summon the will power necessary to carry out reason's works against depraved instinct. This is ultimately the lethal claim to empire on trial in Las Casas's apology for Amerindian nature and culture.

The epistemic system that linked cold, hot, and temperate places to the physiology, psychology, and thereby political status of peoples is too complex to be treated fully here. Suffice it to say that Las Casas minutely replays it as an authoritative framework in the *Apologética* in order to target the contradictory certainties of an intellectual and material culture bent on remaining the political hub of an otherwise exploding geography. His strategy did *not* consist of questioning a system that associated the temperate with the civilized and the intemperate with the uncivilized. Such a move would have been tantamount to suggesting that earth and water were not the heaviest elements at the center of the cosmos, but instead that they configured a planet revolving around the sun. Rather, Las Casas's strategy was to show by means of evidence and reasoning that the Indies were not at all the scorched, barren, or desolate expanse associated with the belt of the tropics, and therefore, that the Indians simply did not fall into the subservient category of subjects or slaves traditionally applied to the inhabitants of extreme places. Las Casas's strategy of extolling the virtues of peoples who lived in 'hot temperate lands' was surely devised with an eye to readers who might object that the Indian tropics could not be *absolutely* temperate with respect to Mediterranean Europe but only *relatively* temperate when measured against the traditional expectation of meeting a scorched tropics. Yet Las Casas was still bent on formally demonstrating the ways in which the Indies could still be said to be more properly temperate than Europe, and this meant that his Indians did possess the intelligence and spiritedness that Mediterraneans had long accorded themselves by reason of their place in the world-machine.

Las Casas's project to *detropicalize*, or rather, *retropicalize* the Indies and its peoples is patent from the opening lines of his *Apologética*. He wrote from direct experience 'of all and such infinite number of nations in this very vast orb, defamed by some [who claimed that] they were peoples lacking in good reason to govern themselves, strangers to all human civility or orderly republics, only because they were

found to be so docile, patient, and humble'.<sup>62</sup> Referring to nature as the handmaiden of a provident Creator, Las Casas marveled at the hubris of empire's apologists who would dare think that God should have abandoned to chance 'such an innumerable number of rational souls, allowing human nature to err [...] in such a great portion of the human lineage, leaving them to be antisocial and therefore monstrous, against the natural inclination of all the peoples of the world'.<sup>63</sup> Monsters, explains Las Casas, evidently winking at Augustine's *De civitate dei*, were God's exceptions to nature, offered 'here and there' as marvels to elicit wonder at his works; it made no sense to classify such a vast portion of the globe and its population under traditional categories of exception. On the contrary, Amerindian nature operated normally, in accordance with the *universal* properties communicated by the aspect of the skies over those lands, and any monsters occasionally witnessed to be generated in the Indies were brought forth *per accidens*. As an example of Indian *accidentals*, Las Casas will later cite Pliny's account of the Hyperboreans, whose polished concave cliffs served as heating mirrors concentrating the sun's rays; he further notes that the generally temperate provinces of Peru, which stood 'under the equinoctial line', also occasionally presented tall peaks rendered impassable by the snow.<sup>64</sup> Although Las Casas cites the 'drowned' character of the 'muddy', 'marshy' rainforests of Darién in Panama and Yucatán in Mexico, he observes by way of qualification: 'but this happens only in a few places, and it is rare, like a monster of nature, just as nature occasionally errs in the natural things it generates. And these errors are called monsters, very rare and very occasional, and alien to nature's ordinary course and order. [...] All of which does not derogate or cancel out the norm, just as if we were to say that all men in the world have five fingers on their hands, although one might be born with one, two, three, or six fingers; and so it is with all things natural'.<sup>65</sup> This reflexion echoes Aristotle's distinction in *Physics I* between those things that are *by nature* and those that happen *by chance*, a distinction that leads Las Casas to a most memorable verdict concerning the Indies: 'And so we will be honoring the truth by saying that *all* these Indies are the most temperate, salubrious, fertile, felicitous, happy, and gracious [lands],

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<sup>62</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética*, "Argumento" I, 285.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 17, I, 354–355; and Pliny, *Natural History* IV, 12, 88–89.

<sup>65</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* I, 375–376.

as well as the most suitable habitat for our human nature than all the lands in the world, even though sometimes the opposite might happen *due to certain particular causes*, which are very rare'.<sup>66</sup> Las Casas argues that Indian nature was nothing like the unnatural mother traditionally evoked to personify the belt of the tropics, and nor were her children anything like the unnatural or preter-natural creatures Mediterraneans had fancied stalking the peripheries of the inhabited world.

Having planted the notion that the Indies had as much title to nature's normative operations as Mediterranean Europe had claimed for itself, Las Casas was ready to develop the argument of the *Apologética*: universal causes, namely celestial influence, and even *accidental* ones, such as the various dispositions of earth, water, and air, coincided in the Indies, for the proliferation of nations capable by nature of exercising the highest orders of monastic, economic, and political prudence (as discussed by the commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Economics*, and *Politics*).<sup>67</sup> Indians could be considered 'barbarians' only in the sense that they possessed no letters to codify their laws and knowledge, or that they had never been exposed to Christian doctrine. The diversity of moral behavior to be found in the Indies issued from the uniqueness of universal and accidental causes acting on each place. Aberrant cultural practices that violated natural, human, and divine law resulted from the exceptional conditions to be found in certain places. But above all, aberrant cultural practices arose from the fact that, under diseased or perverted leaders in the past, accidental behavior such as incest or cannibalism had taken root in tradition. Aberrant behavior in the Americas was no more so than that of many contemporary cultures. More to the point, it was no more aberrant than that of Christendom's founding cultures, especially the Greeks and the Romans.<sup>68</sup> In conclusion, Indian nations were little more than *young* relative to Christendom, for they retained cultural practices that had long been abandoned by Christians. As such, Indians might

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., I, 376. For Aristotle's *Physics I*, I have consulted the translation by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle I*, 315–446.

<sup>67</sup> I am here following Las Casas's synthesis of that argument in *Apologética* 263, III, 1571–1575.

<sup>68</sup> It is Las Casas's systematic juxtaposition of Indian customs with those of ancient and modern peoples in the Old World, that rightly compels Pagden to praise the *Apologética* as 'an expansive piece of comparative ethnology, the first [...] to be written in a European language' (*The Fall of Natural Man* 182).

benefit from temporary tutelage in achieving their full potential as moral beings and, perhaps, in becoming members of the *congregatio fidelium*, but they were not to be treated as subjects or slaves.

Let us briefly point to the body of *proof* that Las Casas would bring to bear on the learned tradition that argued for a universally habitable tropics. The *Apologética* opens with a physical description of Hispaniola, which Las Casas knew and cherished above all the places he had visited in the New World. This physical description, which mindfully includes Hispaniola's extension and coordinates, painstakingly attests, province by province, to the complexionate character of the entire region, the clarity of its waters and airs, and the richness of the soil, not to mention the incredible variety and quantity of its minerals, plants, and animals, or the benevolence of nature in its peoples.<sup>69</sup> Not surprisingly, Las Casas's account of this order of creatures feverishly indulges the sense of wonder that had animated Indographic literature from Herodotus to Columbus. For instance, Las Casas participated in an alchemical tradition that attributed the 'ripening' of base metal into gold to radiation from the sun and other planets, and this tradition had theorized that those places where the sun's influence was greater – deserts, mountaintops, east-facing terrains, and more to the point, the tropical belt itself – were factories of gold and other lesser metals.<sup>70</sup> Speaking of the rich mines dug out of Hispaniola's provinces since the earliest days of colonization, Las Casas reports the extraction of a 'monstrous' thirty-six-pound gold nugget, 'like nothing ever seen or heard in the world [...] nor as big or as beautiful, a most dignified jewel worthy of perpetual custody in Castile's royal chambers [...], a thing that, upon men's setting eyes on it, should have been motive enough to lift up and set alight their hearts and continuously to give greatest thanks to the Creator who made it so'.<sup>71</sup> Tropical nature's copiousness extended to the myriad natural groves, orchards, and seemingly 'infinite fruit' of the Indies. Las Casas's botanical marvels include the magical *guayacán* tree whose stone-hard wood was used in a water infusion to treat syphilis, as well as the gargantuan *ceyba* tree, which was so dense with foliage and so expansive that it could have sheltered 'five hundred horsemen' (Las Casas here invokes Strabo's description in

<sup>69</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 1–20, I, 287–371.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, I, 318.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, I, 319.

the *Geography* of Indian trees so large that ‘five men could barely have braced their trunk with arms extended’).<sup>72</sup> Nature had even improved on the orchard seeds shipped overseas to be planted in Hispaniola, ‘mainly oranges, lemons, citron, pomegranates, and figs, so that never so many or such have been seen throughout the world outside of these Indies’.<sup>73</sup> Las Casas’s bestiary also includes such strangely edible wonders as the serpent-like *iguana*, which boasted ‘a mountain of thorns all the way from its head to the very tip of its tail, making it seem more horrible and terrifying to the eyes’; or the ferocious fish Indians called *tiburón*, an efficient gourmand that could sever a man’s or a horse’s leg in one bite or digest any sort of trash including clay pottery, and that was known to go on gulping down anything tossed its way long after being hauled on a boat; or the alligator, ‘like those they say are found in the Nile,’ whose teeth could ‘split an iron bar,’ but whose reproductive organ was barely the size of those of ‘four or five year old children’; and of course, the footless marine ‘cow’ Indians called *manatí*, in whose ugly humanoid face Columbus had once seen the disappointing echo of mermaids.<sup>74</sup> According to Las Casas, tropical nature had not only rendered these wild creatures useful to humans, but it had also improved on the poultry and livestock transplanted from Castile. Colonists had not been able to keep up with the number of chickens, capons, sheep, goats, pigs, and mules bred in Hispaniola; and ‘in number, beauty, ferociousness, and nobility, beasts of burden surpass any bred around the earth’s entire orb. Thousands of mares and horses wander about wild and lost through the mountains, masterless, for there is no one to say ‘these are mine’.’<sup>75</sup> Lastly, nature’s proliferation in this idyllic habitat had, prior to the population collapse that accompanied the arrival of Europeans, made of Hispaniola an island teeming with ‘infinite peoples’; and such a great multitude as Las Casas and other colonists had once witnessed ‘with our own eyes’, was ‘the most manifest proof that all of this island, as well as all these islands, are the healthiest in the world. [For] they had no wars among them, they suffered no famine or epidemics, [and] people were born and went on to procreate in infinite numbers every day, and every married woman commonly bore three and four and five children [...],

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 13, I, 342–43; and Strabo, *Geography* 15.1.21.

<sup>73</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 20, I, 365.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 10, I, 328–330.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 20, I, 365.

and they died young. It follows that there must have been people in infinite numbers, for this is the most universal and truest conclusion: that where there are no wars or pests, always more people are born than die'.<sup>76</sup>

Predictably, Las Casas gestures at a similar catalogue of treasures for other regions in the tropical Indies, including the fallen Mexica and Inca empires. This move allows him to extend his claim for the complexionate fecundity of the Americas to a territory roughly extending to the mid-latitudes of the northern and southern 'temperate' zones themselves; from about 45° N, which would have fallen on the latitudes of Nova Scotia, to about 45° S, the very confines of the former Inca empire.<sup>77</sup> By Las Casas's account, however, 'the happiest, most delectable, and healthiest of [all these lands] is that which lies *between the tropics*, including islands and terra firma, which the ancients called the torrid zone, and which many believed to be uninhabitable on account of the heat. Their error has been witnessed by all the spice merchants of Seville who come to these parts in order to trade their spices for gold'. Indeed, Las Casas's American testimony fully corroborates the foundational vision of a Columbus who had set out to show his enemies in Castile that the Indies were Eden itself – the most universally temperate, fertile, and populous region of the globe. In size, number, variety, and quality, America's tropical riches spoke to Las Casas of a nature that was indeed more perfect than any other. And if the Indies were universally hospitable, and its nature more perfect than any other, then no one could *in good conscience* continue to construe Indians as barbarians at the scorched world's end.

Let us now return to the role that geometrical optics would play in Las Casas's involved attempt to naturalize the American tropics and its native peoples. Las Casas did not lightly choose Albertus Magnus's *De natura loci* as a key source for the theory of natural diversity deployed in the *Apologética*. Long before the Age of Exploration, the so-called *doctor universalis* had theorized a temperately hyperproductive torrid zone, and his authority on the subject of nature still reigned supreme among Latin Aristotelians in Las Casas's time. Understanding Columbus's goals, Las Casas had already cited Albertus Magnus in the *Historia de las Indias* regarding the intellectual origins of the Indies enterprise, and Albertus

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 370.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 21, I, 373.

Magnus's theories would now implicitly or explicitly underwrite Las Casas's case in the *Apologética*.<sup>78</sup> Alluding for instance to Avicenna's doctrine that peoples toward the equator tended to display a more equable temperament than those in higher latitudes, Las Casas explains why the 'aspect of the sky and [...] distance from the sun' concur for the 'salubrity, fertility and healthiness, felicity and populousness' of a place like Hispaniola.<sup>79</sup> Given that the island extended between 16° N and 20° N, 'the longest day of the year is no longer than 13 hours and a few minutes, and the shortest night no shorter than a little under 11 hours, which is very little difference between them. And this is not too different from the temperateness found on the equator *due to the balance between day and night*'. For Las Casas and his European contemporaries, the longest day of the year on the northern hemisphere was June 21st, when the sun measured at noon was observed to have traveled north along the slanted ecliptic all the way to the tropic of Cancer. Even for places directly under this tropic, the time ratio of day to night on the summer solstice would have been no more than 13  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 10  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours (marking barely a 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ -hour difference between day and night). And for places directly under the equator this ratio was *always* 12 to 12, meaning that days and nights were always equal in length. By contrast, the ratio of day to night on the summer solstice for places near the north pole was seen as approaching 24 to 0, so that the sun did not set on that day. While it may have been true that the sun's rays measured at noon *always* fell perpendicularly somewhere in the tropics, the angle at which those rays fell was not the only factor in determining the sun's effect on this region. Another factor ignored by the traditional theory of the five zones was the *timespan* of exposure to rays. The sun generated heat as it approached any given zenith relative to the observer, and left behind cold as it receded from that zenith. So it was reasonable to believe that in places where days and nights were more or less equally long, the amount of heat communicated by the sun's rays during the day would have been balanced out by the amount of cold communicated by their absence, which rendered such places more temperate than they otherwise might have been.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> For Albertus Magnus's theories on the torrid zone, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 274–278.

<sup>79</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 17, I, 355; and Avicenna, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* 1.1.3.34.

<sup>80</sup> For Albertus Magnus's discussion of tropical temperateness, see *De natura loci* I, 6, 11, lines 45–50.



As for the fertility of the Indies, Las Casas cites an old Indographic tradition reaching back to the Greek historian and diplomat Megasthenes (about 350–about 290 BC), which observed that trees never lost their foliage and, more importantly, that India enjoyed two crops a year.<sup>81</sup> Like the legendary India, Las Casas's Indies likewise yielded 'two crops a year, and in such a timely fashion every single time, that never did it witness sterility, hunger, or want for the earth's fruit; nor did its people suffer any of these things until we arrived. Grain is sown and harvested twice a year, and the same with many other things almost every month, and with fruit all year round; and in terra firma [...], I have eaten grapes from Castile twice in five or six months, all of them from the same vines'.<sup>82</sup> One must bear in mind that as the main generator in the region of the elements, the sun caused things to come into being and to pass away as it approached and retreated along the slanted ecliptic, to and from any given zenith in the sky relative to the observer. Along the equator, the sun passed directly overhead twice a year, once every six months, generating two full cycles of growth and decay, not just in crop-yielding plants but in many other things mineral, vegetal, or animal.<sup>83</sup> By contrast, in places along each of the tropics themselves, the sun passed overhead only once a year, which explained why places in those and higher latitudes outside the torrid zone experienced only one cycle of growth and decay and only one crop a year. By this simple principle, nature in the Indies was nothing less than nature at its most efficient.

Our last example concerns the greater perfection of nature in the belt of the tropics. According to Albertus Magnus, various authors had addressed this question by considering what was known 'about images', that is, about the projection of physical light onto surfaces.<sup>84</sup> Images were more perfectly projected in those places where planetary rays fell to the ground more perpendicularly, whereas images were less perfectly projected in those places where planetary rays fell to the ground more obliquely. Let us recall that in the doctrine of rays borrowed from Albertus Magnus, celestial light was a divine efflux or power that communicated form and motion to lower bodies. That *form* would have been akin to the *logoi* in Plotinus's doctrine of emanation – 'copies'

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<sup>81</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 22, I, 377–378.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>83</sup> For Albertus Magnus's discussion of tropical efficiency, see *De natura loci* I,6, 11, lines 38–44.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, lines 60–62.

or 'images' or 'likenesses' that higher emanants conferred of themselves onto lower emanants in the ladder descending from the Good.<sup>85</sup> Since celestial light was the power in nature that induced *form* in bodies, the angle at which rays fell onto the ground affected how form was conveyed. Rays falling perpendicularly to the ground remained undistorted or proportionate to their source, thereby conveying form moderately or perfectly; whereas rays falling obliquely to the ground were distorted or disproportionate to their source, thereby conveying form immoderately or imperfectly. Insofar as nature was communicated to lower bodies by means of celestial light, tropical nature must have been more moderate or perfect than nature anywhere else on the globe. Las Casas does not directly explicate this aspect of Albertus Magnus's theories about the torrid zone, but it everywhere informs Las Casas's discussion of the manners in which the body comes to be naturally disposed to present the 'forms', 'species', 'images', 'phantoms', or 'likenesses' of the sensible world to the rational soul, so that it may exercise understanding.<sup>86</sup> Las Casas is here deploying the key terminology and premises of a Neoplatonized optics. For Las Casas, the perfection of human nature in the tropics begins at the very moment of conception, when 'celestial bodies, communicating their natural virtues to the human body, dispose it, even before it has received a soul, to be this way or that; and in accordance with that disposition are the degrees of perfection in the [embodied] soul'.<sup>87</sup> Clearly, the aspect of the skies above the Indies concurred in the formation of complexionate and proportionate faces, bodies, limbs, and organs.<sup>88</sup> Once the body had received a soul, 'our understanding, for as long as we are alive, cannot apprehend things except by assimilating through the senses the *species* or *images* of those things'.<sup>89</sup> Insofar as soul was present to the body, what the mind's eye *saw* was a function of what the body presented to it by means of the senses. In temperate places like the West Indies, the moderate refinement of the *spiritus* in the blood allowed it to 'present the *forms* or *species* or *images* or *phantoms* more clearly and orderly, and without horrible distortions, to the imagination, which in

<sup>85</sup> On the traces of Plotinian doctrine in Albertus Magnus's *De natura loci*, see Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire* 254–269.

<sup>86</sup> Las Casas, *Apologética* 23–30, I, 381–418.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, I, 383.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 25–26, I, 391–399.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, I, 394.

turn has the job, when it faces no obstacles, to present them purely to the understanding. This is how the understanding more and more easily and perfectly comes to perceive and form intelligible species'.<sup>90</sup> And in a part of the globe where celestial light itself already conveyed form more moderately or perfectly than anywhere else in the world, would not the *spiritus* have had at its disposal more perfect likenesses of the sensible world to present to human understanding? To be sure, the 'aspect' of the skies above the West Indies had in every way concurred for the felicitous proliferation of humans possessing the *intelligence*, *spiritedness* and, thereby, *moderation* that so worried Aristotelian ethnographers.<sup>91</sup>

Las Casas's broad generalizations about the Indians have earned him numerous enemies and critics to this day, but anyone willing to venture beyond the simplistics of the justly famous *Brevissima relación dela destruyçion delas yndias* (1552) will find a powerful mind at work in the *Historia de las Indias* and *Apologética historia*. This mind understood that a complex epistemic system underwrote the simple but deeply resilient stereotypes of the geopolitical legacy inaugurated by Columbus in the West Indies. Las Casas would surely have been disappointed, though unsurprised, to witness the survival of that ominous legacy today in our own unresolved certainties about the tropics.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 26, I, 398.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 33–39, I, 430–462.

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A TOPOGRAPHER'S EYE:  
FROM GILLES CORROZET TO PIETER APIAN

Tom Conley

A snail slips slowly out of a cavernous lair, a place that cannot be its home [Fig. 1]. Dwelling in its spiral shell, free to go where it will, it slides at its own pace along the ground its foot moistens and sucks as it makes its way. Its proboscis erect, antennae in the air, it ventures into a landscape it can feel or even apprehend but cannot see. The common gastropod is the subject of the twentieth emblem of Gilles Corrozet's *Hécatomgraphie* (1541), a vernacular variant on Andrea Alciati's immensely successful *Emblematum libellus* first published in 1534.<sup>1</sup> The woodcut image illustrates two poems in praise of discretion that the author takes to be a crowning virtue of public duty. The comparison that links its motto, *secret est à louer* [discretion is praiseworthy] to the image is glossed in the quatrain held in the frame fashioned from an ornate design in which ailerons, spirals, fleurons, putti, and two stern faces, born of acanthus leaves, stare at each other across a set of six concentric circles enclosing an enigmatic design. Over it a winged cherub looks down as if to accord the image its benediction. 'Just as the snail [*lymas*] keeps himself in his shell, in great secrecy: so then man is born closed and concealed in discretion'.

Self-containment is the virtue that would seem to be the logical correlative to the image. The poem, set adjacent to the device in the folio to the right further explains – or, in the lexicon of theory, 'unpacks' – what appears to drive the analogy. If the little snail resides in the quiet protection of a home of its own, then we too ought, in our prudence, to be coy and firm in our thoughts; flee evil when it is evident and make use of fortune whenever possible; come forward when danger

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<sup>1</sup> The subtitle of Corrozet's book (the edition of 1541 used here) aptly describes its contents: *Hécatomgraphie. C'est à dire les descriptions de cent figures & hystoires, contenant plusieurs appophtegmes, proverbes, Sentences & dictz tantz des anciens que des modernes [...]* (Paris, Denys Janot: 1541). Denys Janot was then known for his consummately illustrated books, especially those of emblems. Adams A. – Rawles S. – Saunders A., *A Bibliography of French Emblem Books*, 2 vols. (Geneva: 1999), provide background for Alciati (1: 8–117) and Corrozet (1: 367–83).

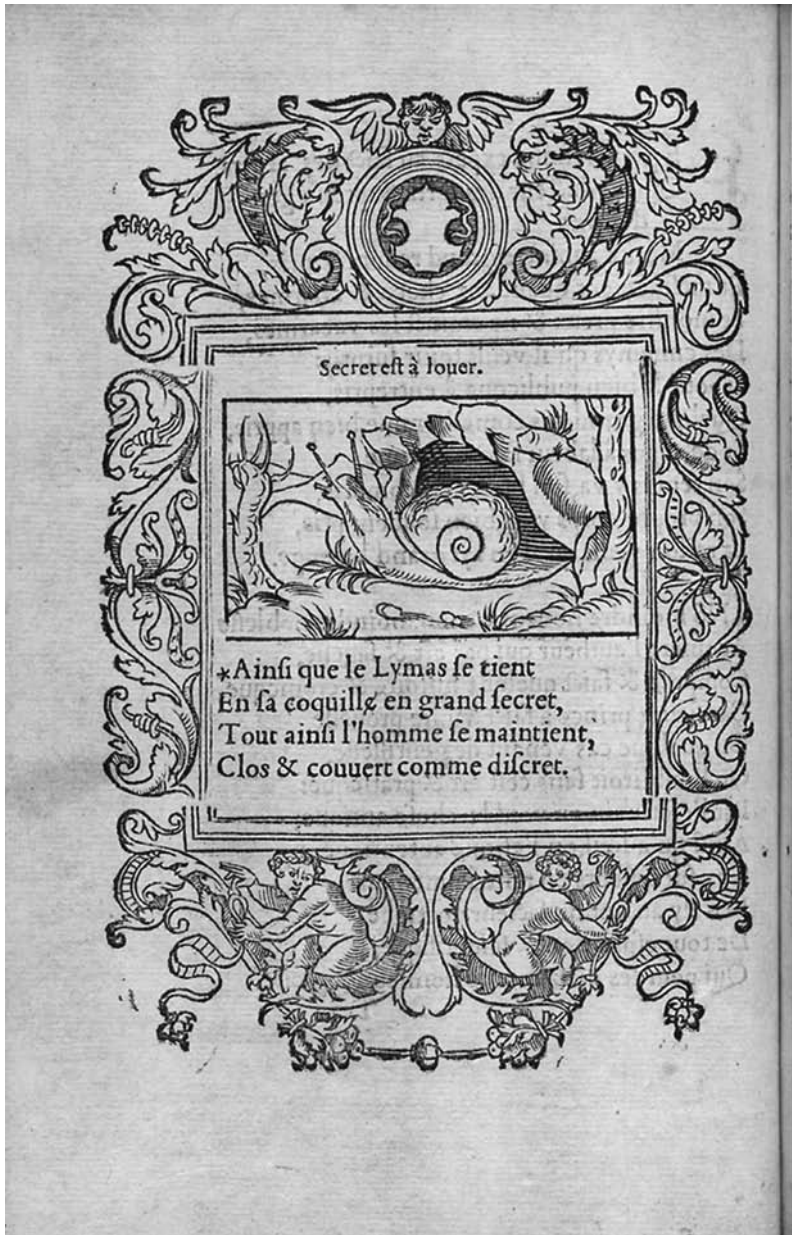


Fig. 1. "Secret est à louer" ["Discretion is Praiseworthy"]. Woodcut illustration to Gilles Corrozet's *Hecatographie* (Paris, Denys Janot: 1541). Houghton Library, Typ 515.43.299.



is past, while remaining concealed in our shell or home. The snail's condition tells us to live within our own limits, and that nothing is better than to be *à tout part soy*, anywhere and everywhere in and about ourselves. The experienced reader of the emblem might wonder if the analogy is far-fetched, however discreet it seems to be, or however much the gastropod excretes a trail of mucous as it crawls forward. Snails seem more apt for a *festina lente* or a variant on Zeno's paradox than the homily of secrecy. However and wherever it goes, the snail cannot be taken in the sense the writer of the conceit would wish.

That the analogy seems not to work may be its virtue. What for our age would be a far-fetched metaphor prompts the reading viewer to look for something else in the image of the spiral, which seems to be an analogue of the curls and flourishes everywhere in the surrounding frame. When the center of the image and the frame are considered together, it can be asked what else is happening in the otherwise modest image. The cockleshell bears resemblance to an eye, and the parallel hatching that depicts the darkness of its lair is similar to an eyeball in a socket outlined by the rocky outcropping above and the ground below. The cave and the snail are part of a zoomorphic landscape in which what is seen is what sees. A monocular shape takes form, its greater body being elsewhere or beyond the limits of the frame. Or perhaps, like a sacred being, the head and body to which the eye belongs cannot be seen or illustrated as such. The snail's two antennae, two minuscule circles perched on its tentacles, would be two blind eyes that touch the atmosphere in which they are placed, inviting comparison with the clumps of branches atop the pruned shrub (that resembles the snail) to the left that could indeed be sentient and at once both vegetable and animal.

The virtual eyes of its antennae are reminders that a binocular view is needed to grasp the illusion of the depth of the field toward which the snail is moving. The scene shifts between the way a single eye offers a haptic 'prehension' of things as they are projected on a two-dimensional surface. At the same time the two eyes afford a mental appreciation of a greater space and field of illusion. The snail brings forward the two faculties, two fashions, and two ways of going about, tasting, grasping and experiencing the world. One pertains to touch, taste, and even smell – to primitive or archaic, what are given to be child-like modes of apprehension – while the other belongs to sight – a faculty said to be of a later and higher order. In the image it would seem that the spiral tells the viewer to turn and twist about the world,

to take sight of it panoramically. The gastropod evokes the sense that the eye can touch what it sees, and in its form it brings together monocular and binocular modes of perception.

If, without belaboring religious ideology by which the Evangelical Christians in Corrozet's milieu see the world as a complex of hidden signs in which the *secrets of nature* attest to the hidden presence of God (or at least a sign of the presence of God), the emblem can be appreciated as an intermediate form, much in the same manner as the snail in the order of living things. The image is somewhere between fable and natural science; between the subject of a *blason* and a description of a minuscule creation of God; between a paradoxical encomium of fragment of the living order of things and a shape that inspires ocular fascination; between a subject of an elegant homily and an object of scientific fantasy and curiosity. In its intermediate or amphibious form the snail is both a snail and an eye. Its sense of "touch" tells the viewer that to see well, and to see discreetly (and discretely) is tantamount to observing the world with keen "tact". If the snail's manner of apprehending the world can be applied to the very words that describe its virtues, the gastropod's discretion amounts to a certain kind of printed 'secretion' in which obliquity or indirect sight and speech are appreciated for the very truths that are at once concealed and revealed as much on the various surfaces of the page and its world as its inner pleats and folds.

When seen as an eye the snail and its milieu bring forward a tension of topography and geography. In its relation with the milieu in which the snail is moving the isolated eye can be imagined gazing upon the world of which it is a part – *tout à part soy* – and that might indeed be reflected on its pupil. Yet, paradoxically, the eye is single, cyclopean, and paradoxically detached from the milieu that it appears to behold and in which it is seen. As an organ without a body, as a sort of pre-modern complement to the concept of a 'body without organs', the eye implies that its ability to locate itself depends on how the observer that it beholds will, first, discover it and, second, situate it in a given milieu.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Developed in Deleuze G. – Guattari F., *Mille plateaux* (Paris: 1980), the concept of the *corps sans organes* engages sentience and sensation. A body without organs is sensitive, even erogenous, *all over* its entire surface. No given zone is given privilege over another, be it the eye, ear, nose, hand or pudenda. Sensitivity is intensely ubiquitous. If the philosophers' concept is applied to this image it would be said that when

What the snail and its environs reveal and conceal has an immediate reminder in the celebrated similitude with which Pieter Apian, following Ptolemy, inaugurated his *Cosmographia*. In his landmark manual (that witnessed thirty editions between 1524 and the end of the sixteenth century), Apian tenders an emblem to illustrate the differences between geography and topography.<sup>3</sup> In the woodcut tipped into the Parisian editions of 1551 and 1553, two images are contained in as many circles enclosed within a rectangular frame; below, two circles in a rectangle of identical size and proportion contain two scenes [Fig. 2]. The upper left circle in the rectangle above encloses a world map (the North Pole is at the bottom and Antarctica is at the top) displaying the known world prior to the Columbian discoveries. The three continents, viewed as they had been shown on T-O maps, are in a vaguely representative view in which the River Nile dominates the African continent and the Caucasian mountains that of Asia. Geography, Apian declares in homage to Ptolemy and his followers (Johannes Werner is cited in parenthesis), the description of the world and its place in the heavens, is to the painting of a portrait – seen in the circle to the immediate right – as topography, in itself the consideration of ‘a few places or particular spots, without having among them any comparison or semblance with the surrounding earth’ is to a detail of the portrait. To close the similitude a city-view is drawn of some densely packed buildings forming a defensive wall around the bottom of an island on which a great chateau and monastery are placed. Its expanse is seen next to two surreal shapes in the diminutive frame to the right. An ear, that resembles an ichnographic view of an island, floats in white space above an eye that seems to be looking at the city-view to its left.

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detached from the body or zone of sensitivity with which it is associated the eye gains the sense of tactility that belongs to the *corps sans organes*. Deleuze further develops the idea in his work on the paintings of Francis Bacon; see *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*. 2 vols. (Paris: 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Karrow R.W. Jr., *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps* (Chicago: 1993) 49–63 and Ortroy F., *Bibliographie de l'oeuvre de Pierre Apian* (Amsterdam: 1901–1963), remain strong sources. Alpers S., *The Art of Describing* (Chicago – London: 1983) 133–134 and 167, Besse J.-M., *Les Grandeurs de la terre: Aspects du savoir géographique à la Renaissance* (Paris: 2003) 115–119, and Nuti L., “Le Langage de la peinture dans la cartographie topographique”, in Bousquet-Bressolier C. (ed.), *L’Oeil du cartographe et la représentation géographique du Moyen Age à nos jours* (Paris: 1995) 54–55, count among historians making sustained and effective use of the *Cosmographia*.

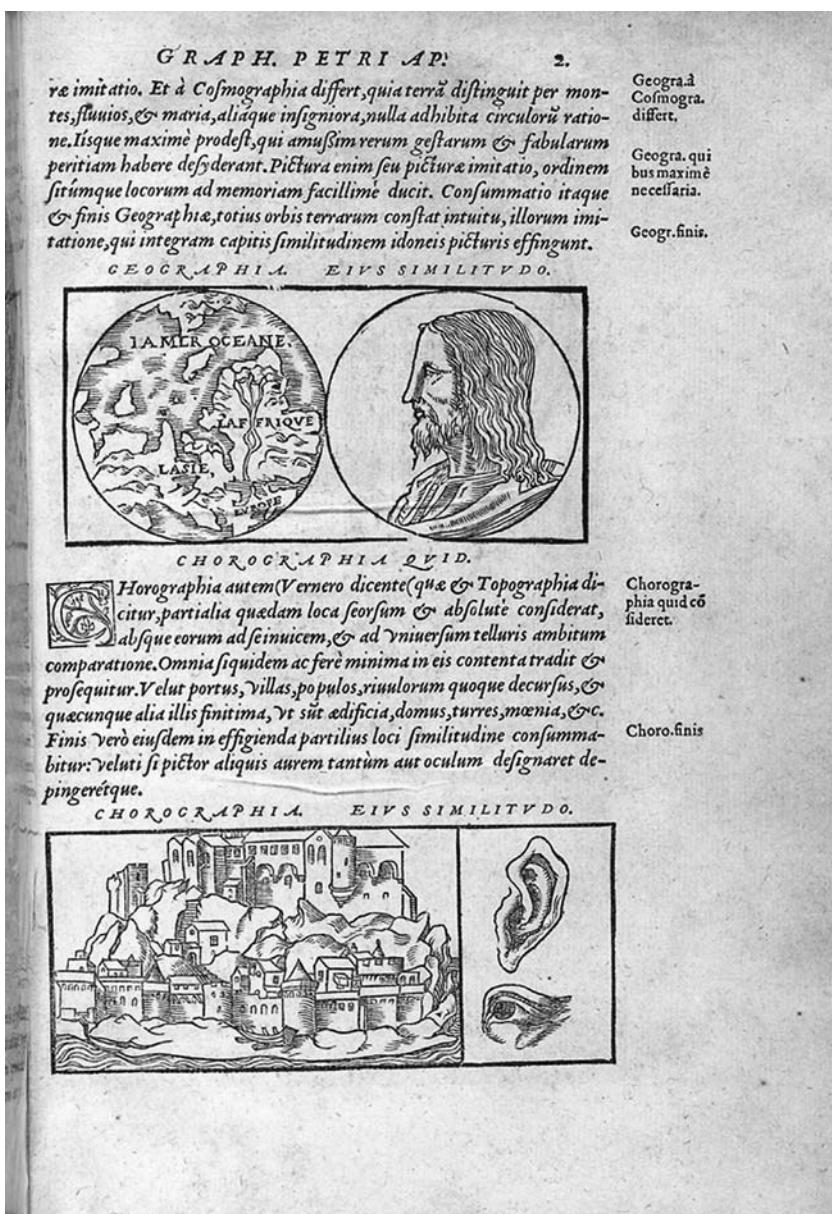


Fig. 2. *Geographia. Eius similitudo* [Likeness of Geography] and *Chorographia. Eius similitudo* [Likeness of Chorography]. Woodcut illustrations to Peter Apian's *Cosmographia* (Paris, Vivantius Gaultherot: 1553) fol. 2r. Houghton Library Typ 515.53.149.

When the four images are seen together some uncommon parallels with Corrozet's image come forward. First, the Bosch-like eye of the *Hécatomgraphie* finds its model in the image of the organ that looks onto the city-view. Second, the play of monocular and binocular vision is shown in the contact of the two circles that enclose the world and the portrait of the man in profile in the upper right corner of the page. The double view offered by the two circles and the two *single* eyes seen in profile (that contemplate the objects before them) would be in a flat perspective. Third, the geographical images are taken, as in the emblem, to be objects of contemplation.<sup>4</sup> The man in the upper right hand circle gazes upon the world from an angle perpendicular to ours. In that configuration the sense of power that comes from the difference of the viewer or viewers seen frontally or in profile is manifest.<sup>5</sup> The viewer of the world map is above, omnipotent, like God, while the man portrayed is equally subject of the viewer's scrutiny, to the point that he seems to share as he looks upon the image of the world as would the viewing reader. Fourth, the man portrayed has striking resemblance to late-gothic images and sculpted busts of Christ, and thus brings a religious inflection to the similitude. In the visual field he is the unobstructed and static object of our gaze while his gaze is one that would be similar to ours as we look upon the world. And the globe he contemplates – albeit across the border of the circle – is total, to the point even that the intersection of the two tangents at the level of his nose assures a contact between one sacred form and another while, below, the isolated eye may be blocked from seeing what is shown to

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<sup>4</sup> That maps are objects of contemplation is richly discussed topic. Mangani G. *Cartografia morale: geografia, persuasione, identità* (Modena: 2006), offers a history of the energies invested in the meditation on maps; Lavezzo K., *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca – London: 2006), tilts meditation in the direction of ideology; Ollson G., *Abysmal: A Critique of Cartographic Reason* (Chicago: 2007), reads the Ebstorf map as an object that inspires visual meditation. Certeau M. de, *La Fable mystique: XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: 1982) 37, 144–145, and *passim*, determined that prior to oceanic travel the map could prompt quasi-mystical voyages by the way the viewer saw himself or herself traveling about the world while 'reading' the map itself.

<sup>5</sup> Schapiro M., *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text* (The Hague: 1973), notes that the Pantocrator who looks directly at the viewer in medieval images gains power through a gaze that humbles whoever is in its field of view ('the Pantocrator needs you'). By contrast, images of people seen praying in profile confer power upon the viewer whose gaze is cast upon them without the disturbance of visual acknowledgment or response.

its left. The cyclopean eye, finely hatched with lines of latitude and longitude, is at once an anatomical object, a detail, and an island, *like* that of the city-view, a floating agglomeration of buildings. What sense can be made of things in detail, as various secrets of nature, is the question implicitly asked in this section of the illustration.

Corrozet's eye bears more than passing resemblance to that found at the bottom of Apian's illustration. Where Apian's floats Corrozet's crawls. Each begs questions about location and being; each asks the viewer to see how and where analogies in image and in writing can go and with what implications concerning the greater issues of situation: how do we see, with what faculties, and how are they tied to matters of space and place? If being is a function of location, it matters to inquire if, how, and what one knows must precede contemplation of the greater world and the heavens. And though, as Corrozet's emblem infers that epistemology (taken as investigation and gathering of knowledge) antecedes ontology (study of the abstraction of its meaning and being), can it not also be said that in psychoanalytic, poetic, and material senses alike, topography precedes cosmography – even if it is considered to be an adjunct? The errant pupil that is the snail can be construed as a topographic eye.

### *The Cosmographia and its Ocular Mirror*

From this standpoint the design of the *Cosmographia* in which the similitude is found merits closer inspection. The manual everywhere begs its readers – presumably students in geography – to take cognizance of the world by asking where their bodies (or their parts) are located in respect to other places. It implicitly asks from where or what point of view they learn the implications of “location” with respect to the greater world.<sup>6</sup> Further, as a book of its time its own sense of location varies

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<sup>6</sup> Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century* 49–63, offers the most cogent and readily available biography. Apian (1495–1552), born in Leisnig (between Leipzig and Dresden), studied at the University of Leipzig before moving to Vienna in 1520. His excellence in mathematics and astronomy was evinced in his first world map of the same year, based on Ptolemy and Waldseemüller, on which see Shirley R.W., *The Mapping of the World: Early Printed World Maps 1472–1700* (London: 1987) 51 [entry 45]. His *Isagoge* (1521) explains the map and anticipates his *Cosmographicus liber* (Landshut: 1524) that would witness twenty-nine more editions over the next 85 years. In 1526 Apian and his brother Georg settled in Ingolstadt where they opened a print shop. The following year Pieter was awarded a professorship of mathematics at the Uni-

from edition to edition, not only in the placement of text and image, but also in the material that Apian's gifted student, Gemma Frisius, added after 1530. And after 1544, for explanatory purposes he folds into the book a truncated cordiform world-map. Topographic material concerning triangulation figures in addenda that enhance its locative orientation. Rudimentary images of men surveying the landscapes in which they find themselves seem to anticipate many that are found in other treatises, from Oronce Fine and Jacques Focard to Albert Foullon.<sup>7</sup> If a single innovation emerges from the initially Ptolemaic tenor of the work, it is found in the primacy accorded to the sensate experience of the 'measure' of local space gained through the narrative and figural order of the book itself. Apian's reader is prone to see (and to find) a geographical identity that is paradoxically fragmentary, local and – with an uncommonly attenuated presence of religious material – universal. The means and effects of its construction of topography become an emerging agenda in the evolution and variation that mark the *Cosmographia*. Woodcut illustrations,

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versity. He published numerous maps and manuals, among others the *Cosmographiae introductio* of 1529 and 1532. His cordiform map of 1530 preceded two books on the quadrant and horoscope. He discovered five comets between 1531 and 1539, prior to publishing his *Astronomicum Caesareum* of 1540, ostensibly his greatest work in the science of the heavens, 'one of the last great attempts at explaining the Ptolemaic system' (Karrow, *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century* 62). It is well known that Apian found a friend in Charles V, the Emperor of Spain, who named him the Court Mathematician. Charles then dubbed him Knight of the Holy Roman Empire. As Karrow notes, Apian's 'real contribution to the history of cartography lay in his *immensely popular books* on geography, cosmography, and astronomy and in his development of observational instruments. He was also a printer of extraordinary books, an aspect of his career that has not been sufficiently studied' (ibid., 62, emphasis mine). Broc N., *La Géographie de la Renaissance* (Paris: 1986) 61–64, studies Apian in view of the renewal of cosmography, which Cosgrove D., *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: 2001), develops in keen detail in his treatment of the history of the fortunes of the science.

<sup>7</sup> See Fine's *La Composition et usage d'un singulier métyhéroscope géographique* (1543), illustrated in Lestringant F. and Pelletier M., "Maps and Descriptions of the World in Sixteenth-Century France", in Woodward D. (ed.), *The History of Cartography 3: The European Renaissance* (Chicago: 2007) 1465, fig. 47.1; see also Fine (1542, 1549, 1551); Focard (1546); Foullon (1561); Merliers (1575). Lindgren U., "Land Surveys, Instruments, and Practitioners in the Renaissance", in Woodward (ed.), *History of Cartography 3* 477–508, offers a rich review. She notes that in his treatise appended to the *Cosmographia* Gemma Frisius brings forward a first practical treatment of triangulation after Alberti and Regiomontanus. By and large, however, a 'lack of correspondence between theory and practice in land surveying mirrors a similar lag in the general cartography of the Renaissance, where modern method of compiling maps had been postulated long before observations of sufficient precision were possible' (508). Imprecision is implied to belong to the aesthetic regime of the landscape, what the painter and writer take as their task to describe.

volvelles, and maps in the text become cause for wonder and a sense of displacement.

Following the illustrated title-page, the book uses its combinations of text and woodcut images to shuttle to and fro from universal to local space. Apian's celestial domain gives way to Gemma Frisius's description of 'regions and countries by geographical artifice' prior to a section on the 'on the use of the Astronomical ring, by the same Gemma', as the title makes clear: *le tout avec figures a ce convenantes, pour donner intelligence* (the whole with fitting figures to bring intelligence [to the design]).<sup>8</sup> In the Parisian (French) edition of 1553, the editor Vivant Gautherot inserts a poem to show the buying reader how he or she can use the book to obtain a higher, indeed contemplative sense of the world.<sup>9</sup>

Au Bening Lecteur

Amy lecteur, Apian veult ensuyvre  
 Le seigneur Dieu, declairant ses haultz faictz,  
 Car il *descript et pourtraict* en ce livre  
 Les cieulx, la terre, & les orbes parfaictz;  
 D'astres luy santz, recite les effectz,  
 Les mouvementz, puissances de nature,  
 Et monstre a l'oeil, par reigle et par figure,  
 Les regions de la terre habitable:  
 A celle fin qu'humaine creature  
 Contemple en soy ce qui est profitable.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The summary (stressed in *Italic* above) reflects the title so as to make a closed whole of the book itself: *La cosmographie de Pierre Apian, docteur et mathématicien tres excellent, traictant de toutes les Regions, Pais, Villes, & Citez du monde, Par artifice Astronomique, nouvellement traduite de Latin en François par Gemma Frisius, Docteur en Medecine, & Mathematicien de l'université de Louvain, de nouveau augmentée, oultre les precedents impressions, comme l'on pourra veoir en la page suivante. Le tout avec figures a ce convenantes, pour donner plus facile intelligence* (Paris, Vincent Gautherot: 1553) fol. a i v. [The edition consulted here belongs to the Bibliothèque Ceccano of Avignon, 15624]. The earlier French edition – *La Cosmographie de Pierre Apian, livre tresutile* [...] (Antwerp, Gregoire Bonte: 1544) – on which Gautherot's new version is based, omits reference to the last clause 'the whole with appropriate figures in order to provide intelligence'. The Parisian editions, it will be seen, amplify and stress further the 'locatedness' of the *Cosmographia*.

<sup>9</sup> 'Si le monde voulez sçavoir pourtraire/ Et le circuit de la terre perlustrer/ Che [sic] livre achaptez, il le vous declaire/ Si le monde voulez savoir pourtraire/ Sans aller loing, & grand despençe faire [...]' (fol. A I v). [If you want to know how to portray the world/ And travel about and around it/ Buy this book, it will tell show you./ If you want to know how to portray the world/ Without going far and a great expense [...]].

<sup>10</sup> Fol. a i v, emphasis mine: 'To the Worthy Reader. My friend dear reader, Apian follows/ the path of our Lord, declaring his worthy deeds,/ for he describes and portrays in this book/ The perfect heavens, earth and planets,/ the movements, powers



The eight-line piece that follows, by Fran[çois] Barat, 'native of Argenton in the Berry', juxtaposes its author's site of origin to the myth of Endymion and a sense of our need to admire the globe:

D'Endymion fut la Lune amoureuse  
Iadis, Lecteur, par grand'affection:  
Car luy premier, sa nature fameuse  
Rendue auroit par noble invention.  
Sera ce donc cas d'admiration.  
Si maintenant la Terre est affectée  
A Appian, qui l'ha sans fiction  
Tant vivement paincte, traictée, & notée.  
Grace & Labeur<sup>11</sup>

In both poems the art of description, what will be taken in a topographic sense, is contrasted to the survey of the matrix or sphere in which local places will be found. The gist of these words follows that of the *Carmen* found in the Latin editions of both Antwerp and Paris, in which the reader is asked in a litany to behold the thousand places, cities, and towns that are contained in the book under the heavens.<sup>12</sup>

Situated between the title page and dedicatory poems, the preface makes much of the difference it establishes between cosmic and local spaces. In the Parisian edition words about the origins of astronomy go to and from practical application in other arts and sciences, notably for

aucuns qui suyvent les choses polytiques & civiles, s'appliquant totallement a *bien entendre les loix des villes & Regions*, & celles qui concernent le faict de guerres, les aultres s'addonnant à lire la sainte escripture, selon l'intelligence de Sainte Eglise, affin que par icelle [people] soient incitez & induitz de plus vertueusement vivre. Et s'il y en a qui *aultrement* le facent, devons prier Dieu les vouloir tellement amander, qu'ilz ne prennent en vain la sainte parolle. *Aulcuns* commes Rhetoriciens, & telz, semblables ingenieux, & subtilz esperitz, voluntiers par grand affection lisent histoires, & poesies. Ausquels ce present livre de Cosmographie

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of nature, and he shows to the naked eye, in diagrams and figures,/ the regions of the habitable earth:/ to whose end human creatures contemplate in themselves what is best for them'.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 'With Endymion was the Moon in love,/ Once, Reader, with great affection: For he first, in his famous way/ Would have portrayed it with noble invention./ So thus here will be a work of admiration./ And now the world is assigned/ To Apian, who, without fiction,/ So vividly has it figured, shown, and noted. Grace and Labor'.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., *Cosmographia Petri Apiani* (Antwerp, Gregorio Bontio: 1550) fol. a i v, and (Paris, Vivantium Gaultherot: 1553) fol. a i v.

d'Apian (traduict de Latin en François) sera tres expedient & necessaire, veu que la *Cosmographie est la droite sente & chemin*, à la science d'Astronomie. Car on n'y *trouve* les cours des cieulx, & planettes: la *situation* des elementz, la haulteur du Soleil, l'augmentation & diminution de la Lune. Encores y est contenu la forme et maniere comment on peult faire la description de *toutes regions ou places que nous voulons*. Aussi y *trouvera on la vraye situation des quatre principales parties du monde*.<sup>13</sup>

A pitch that a savvy editor directs to a general public, the editor's words indicate more than they declare. The geometry of the heavenly bodies, it is implied, would be a model to redress imperfection and guide local policy. The reader of the cosmography will forcibly become a topographer or chorographer with a firm grasp of local knowledge. He or she will have God's machine in mind and will thus impart its beauty to 'others', implied here to be denizens of worlds outside of Christendom, who might be found to the east and west of the places shown in the book, and all the more as it stakes claim to knowledge of the New World. The prefatory matter suggests, further, that those who describe the ambient world in prose or verse will benefit by arching their words skyward, along the *droit chemin* that (hindsight tells us) will later become the Cartesian itinerary of self-edification. But no sooner than 'the science of Astronomy' seems to be a goal, the 'four principal parts' of the world bring the reader back to earth.

Site, situation, and alterity redound. The printer's arrangement of the final sentences in the design of a *cul-de-lampe* further *locates* them in the place of the book, at an ostensive vanishing point of its origin in Paris. Its reassuring familiarity, shown in print on the title page, is offset by the allure of the greater world's marvel and alterity. After noting, by

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<sup>13</sup> Fol. 2r-v, emphasis mine: 'Some who follow political and civil matters, dedicating themselves entirely to comprehend the laws of cities and regions, and those concerning the art of war, and other committing themselves to reading Scripture according to the intelligence of the Church so that thus people will be induced and encouraged to live more virtuously. And if others do otherwise, we must pray to God that they amend themselves in order not to take his word in vain. Others, rhetoricians and such, ingenious and subtle minds, eagerly read narratives and poetry: to whom Apian's present book of Cosmography (translated from Latin into French) will be very expedient and necessary, seeing that Cosmography is the direct road and path to the science of Astronomy. For there are found the course of the heavens and planets; the situation of the elements, the height of the Sun, the growth and waning of the Moon. And even contained within is the form and manner by which description can be made of all the places we wish. Thus within will be found the true situation of the four principal parts of the world'.

way of affiliation with Vespucci and Waldseemüller, the three continents and the island of America (the latter containing Peru, having been found abundant with gold), the text lays further stress on its topographical character:

Et en oultre sont escriptes les villes & places plus renommées &  
 principales, qui sont situées esdictes quatre parties du monde.  
 Encores beaucoup d'étranges choses, coutumes, & monstres prodigieuz,  
 tant d'hommes que de bestes, qui illec ont esté trouvez, &  
 veuz, comme en la deuxième partie de ce present livre plus am-  
 plement sera declairé. D'avantage aussi sera il au Pylotes,  
 maryniers, & mesureurs de terre moult ydoine, expedient & nécessaire  
 les amateurs de Cosmographie estantz a l'hostel en leur estude, pourront per-  
 lustrer & voyager seurement tout ce circuit de la terre, sans grand coust,  
 n'aucun dangier, ce que aultrement ne se peult faire n'accomplir  
 sans grand despence & peril de sa vie. Ausquelz je soubhaitte toute  
 prosperité & salut, par la bonté & grace du createur  
 des cieulx & de la terre.

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De Paris, lan de  
 Nostre Salut,  
 1553<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Fol. 2v. Gautherot's Latin édition does not use this typographic design in its layout of the prefatory letter to the first edition (1524), but the 1550 Antwerp edition does. In both editions the names of the dedicators and the dedicatee are set in the cul-de-lampe format. The English translation runs as follows: 'Furthermore the most well known cities and principal places are described, that are situated in the four said parts of the world. And even many strange things, customs, and prodigious monsters, of both man and beast that have been found within, and seen, as it will be amply declared in the second part of this book. And too, it will be useful for pilots, mariners and surveyors of land, and expedient for amateurs of cosmography who stay in the confines of their study, who will be able to go about with assurance and travel all around the world, at little cost and without danger, which otherwise can be neither accomplished nor done without great expense and peril of life. To whom I wish all prosperity and salvation, by the goodness and grace of the creator of the heavens and of the earth. [...] From Paris, in the year of our Salvation, 1553'.

*Hand, Eye and Ear*

Both the Latin and the French texts of Gaultherot's editions fittingly address the disposition of the text and woodcut image on the title-page verso [Fig. 3]. The words of the title, also set in a *cul-de-lampe* disposition, move from the greater spheres of cosmography (in bold upper case letters) to the names of Apian and Frisius (noted to be from Louvain) and mention of the treatment of all the places in the world. The words are aimed toward the upper pole of an instrument Apian later calls (fol. 22v) an azimuth, at the top of which is marked 'zenith', at the very place where Frisius' name appears on the title-page. The title descends to the upper pole of the image from which lines of latitude radiate to meet the degrees of an equator that separates the semi-circle they draw from an ornate celestial hemisphere designating the constellations of the heavens against a black background. Especially noteworthy is that a (left) hand emerges from the lower edge of the frame enclosing the illustration. It holds a handle to show that it is an instrument. Implied is that the body to which the hand would be attached is absent, without organs, and entirely celestial: but does it not emerge from *Parisiis*, the site noted just below? Would the hand belong to the reader from Paris or to a deity who overlooks the heavens? That it can be both 'here', in and about the book, and 'there', over and above the heavens, indicates a tension of topography and cosmography that will run through the book.<sup>15</sup>

The isolated hand of the image is not unrelated to the first and most dramatically telling of all of the chapters in the *Cosmographia*: "Quid sit cosmographia, et quo differat à Geographia & Chorographia". The distinction between cosmography and topography with which Ptolemy

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<sup>15</sup> Editions from Antwerp (see notes 6 and 8 above) illustrate the title-page with an image of a mounted globe that figures at the end of chapter 14, "Comment on pourra appliquer le globe cosmographique aux quatre coings du monde & tellement qu'il puisse servir à toutes Regions, Provinces, villes" (fol. 22r-v), and: "Quomodo globus cosmograph. ad mundi cardines, et ad quancunque Regionem, Provinciam, aut Oppidum, recte sit aptandus" (fols. 20r-21v). On the title page the legs of the globe's armature are set firmly on the ground on which a compass and plumb are set adjacent to a cylinder destined to measure latitudes. The globe displays the three known continents on which its names are placed (along with notation of Taprobana) in a sunlit area. The animals that decorate the armature yield an effect of wonder and enigma.



Fig. 3. Title-Page to Peter Apian's *Cosmographia* (Paris, Vivantius Gaultherot: 1553). Houghton Library Typ 515.53.149.

inaugurates his *Geographia* is repeated here, but with the new difference that three woodcut images further enable its contemplation. In the Parisian editions two woodcuts are set adjacent to each other on facing folios. On the left (fol. 1v) the geography of the earth and heavens is shown by an isolated eye out of which radiate lines that draw across and contain an earthly sphere, half-illuminated and half in hatched lines of shadow, and reach the diameter of a greater heavenly counterpart, illuminated and shaded in the same way [Fig. 4]. Beyond being led to wonder if what the eye beholds is based on intra- or extra-missive vision, the spectator notes the presence of the perfect circle of the eye's pupil whence the eight lines are shown emerging. The eye floats over '*Geographia quid*', the emblematic superscription over the explanation of the distinction between cosmography and geography. The latter deals with the 'principal and known parts of the world' that comprise its entirety, which the French (in the 1544 edition, unlike the Latin) shades with poetic innuendo: '*Geographie (comme Vernerus en sa paraphrase dict) est des principaulx & cogneues parties de la terre, dautant que d'icelles tout lentier monde est constitue, aussi des choses plus renomnees, qui a icelles parties de la terre sont adherentes, une description, paincture ou imitation*' (fol. iii v) [Geography (as Vernerus states in his paraphrase) is of the principal and known parts of the world inasmuch as from these the whole sum of the world is constituted, as well as the most renowned things, that to which these parts of the earth adhere: a description, portrayal or imitation]. Here the deictic *icelle* echoes *ciel*, the sky above, and *lentier*, the lenticular aspect of the image congealed in the figure of the eye. The tonic force of 'description, paincture ou imitation' at its end bends the sentence in the direction of topography.<sup>16</sup>

The French continues to move to and fro in dialogue with the image. In the edition of 1553 the eye contemplates what seems to be a pure abstraction, the earthly sphere that could be a continental mass but also a cloud-like and scarcely identifiable space. The carefully drawn

<sup>16</sup> In the Parisian edition of 1553, fols. 1v–2r: '*Geographia (ut Vernerus in Paraphrasi ait) est telluris ipsius praecipuarum ac cognitarum partium, quatenus, ex eis totus cognitusque terrarum constituitur: et insigniorum quorumlibet, quae huiusmodi telluris partibus cohaerent, formula quadam ac picturae imitatio*'.

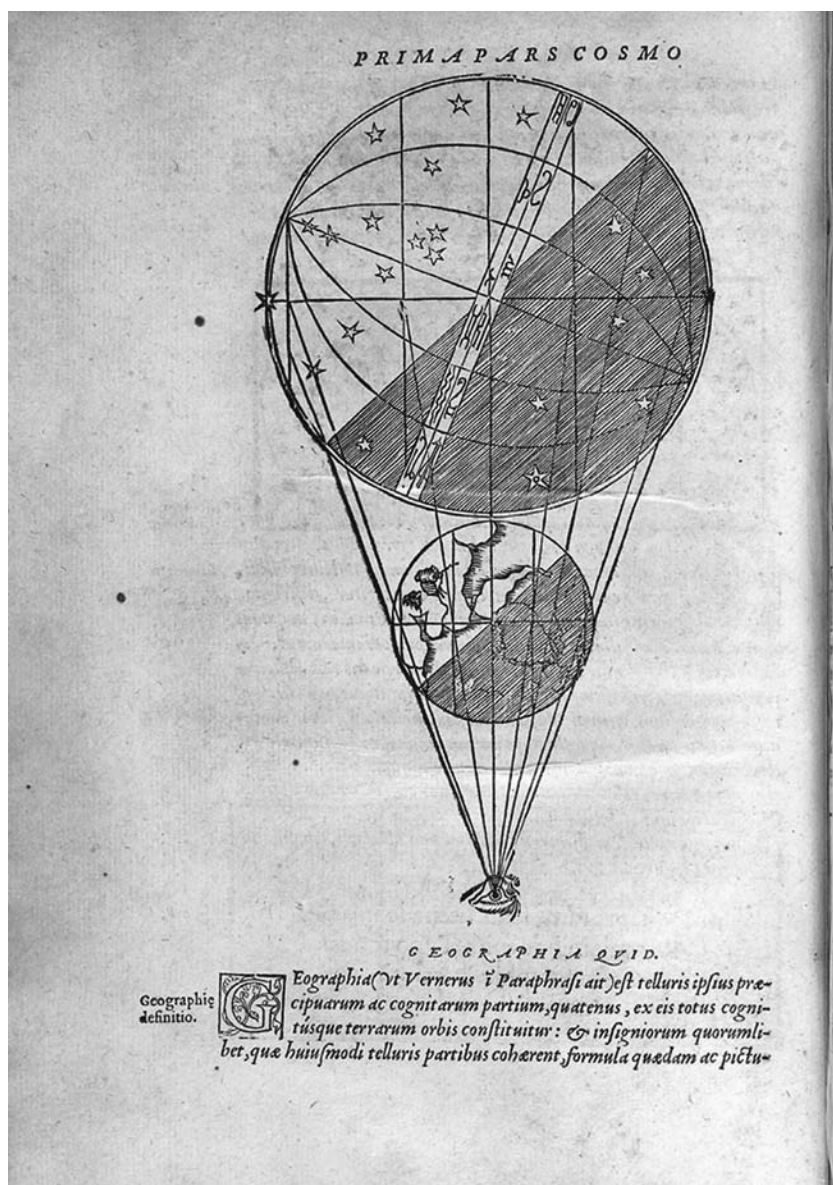


Fig. 4. *Geographia quid* [What is Geography]. Woodcut illustration to Peter Apian's *Cosmographia* (Paris, Vivantius Gautherot: 1553) fol. 1v. Houghton Library Typ 515.53.149.

pupil of the discerning eye would be a microcosm on which the two greater spheres are reflected. The ‘description, painting or imitation’ that would be the matter and substance of the woodcut remains bathed in abstraction. By strong contrast, the Antwerp editions (in French and Latin), while more crudely drawn, respond more directly to the text. A more approximate eye beholds a world on which a landscape can be seen and on whose surface, top and bottom, two human figures walk. Adjacent to the Ptolemaic image is a world-map, in the form of a globe, on which are marked and drawn the continents of Europe, Africa, Asia and America (the name place on the southern continent). The text clearly underlines that it is up to date by having the image designate the world as it is known. The fact is further confirmed by the next sentence: ‘Et est differente a la Cosmographie, car elle distingue la terre, & determine, par montaignes, fleuves, rivières, mers, & aultres choses plus renommées, sans avoir regard aux Circles celestes de la Sphere’ (fol. iii v): which the woodcut displays in the line of the Nile in Africa and the tufts suggesting the presence the Caspian mountains in Asia.

### *What is Topography?*

The sentence that follows, of capital interest for poets and artists seeking to produce ‘worlds’ that rival with the earth and heavens, implies that *observation*, what the monocular eye is doing in the image above (in the Antwerp editions) or to the left (in the Parisian counterparts) stands at the beginning of any description, be it historical or aesthetic. ‘Et est [la Geographie prouffitable] grandement prouffitable [le plus a] à ceulx qui desirent parfaitement sçavoir les histoires & gestes des Princes & aultres fables: [& fictions aux histoires samblables. Car]: car la paincture ou limitation de paincture facilement maine a memoire l’ordre & situation des places & lieux’ (fol. iii v). [‘Iisque maxime prod-est, qui a[da]mussim rerum gestarum & fabularum peritiā habere desyderant. Pictura enim seu picturae imitatio, ordinem situmque locorum ad memoriā facillime ducit’ (fol. 1v, 2r [Paris]).] [And geography is most advantageous for those who want to know perfectly the deeds and stories of the Princes and other fable and fiction in similar histories. For painting or the imitation of painting easily lends to memory the order and situation of places and sites]. In today’s terms Apian is noting that ‘locational imaging’ conduces narrative.



But where there is narrative, space must be identical to or congruent with an active agent, something or someone (as in Aristotle's *Poetics*) that moves from place to place. For this reason, even though the text is close to its source in Ptolemy and Johannes Werner, the human figure intervenes, not only in the gist of the citation but, more crucially for the observant and wandering eye, in the strategy of the woodcut illustration. In the Parisian edition the sentence continues, '& par ainsi [Et par ainsi] la consummation & fin de la Geographie est constituée au [en le] regard de toute la rondeur de la terre, a l'exemple de ceulx qui veulent entierement paindre la teste d'une personne avec [avecque] ses proportions'. ['Consummatio itaque & finis Geographiae, totius orbis terrarum constat intuitu, illorum imitatione, qui integram capitis similitudinem idoneis picturis effingunt']. Meaningful images and narratives are made by spatial measure, by a *gaze* cast upon the 'entire rotundity of the earth', but only such that the gaze on the globe must be directed at the same time upon the head of a person, who could indeed be he or she who gazes. The text suggests that wholes and parts must be discerned at once: that a grasp of the heavenly spheres can be contemplated by imagining an artist or a writer 'describing' a person's head. An abyssal condition is suggested, too, if the isolated eye at the origin of the image to the left is likened to that of the man who is portrayed on the right.

The famous image that follows the text both extends and mediates the tensions initially evinced in the words. Where the image on the left distinguishes geography from cosmography, the two woodcuts on the right are said to delineate geography from chorography. In the 1544 and other editions from Antwerp a fairly crude spherical world-map (north pole at the bottom and the south at the top) is placed in a square. Visible but unnamed are the continents of Europe, Africa and western Asia (Taprobana floating in the sea to the north and east of a tip of Antarctica). In the square to the right a pensive man, his forehead balding and his chin graced with a hirsute goatee, is shown in three-quarter perspective as if, lost in thought, he looks both inward and outward. Elaborate parallel- and cross-hatching lends amplitude and depth to the face. The French text below implies that the man might indeed *personify* geography at the same time he is an object of its comparison to painting or description. And, as the text indicates, he both contemplates (*consydere*) and gazes (*regarde*): 'Chorographie (comme dict Vernere) [laquelle] aussi est appelee Topographie, elle considere [consydere ou regarde] seulement aucuns lieux ou places particulieres

[particuliers] en soy-mesmes, sans avoir entre eulx quelque comparaison ou semblance [samblance] à [avecq] lenvironnement de la terre' (fol. 4r). Which is less explicit in the Latin: 'Corographia autem (Vernero dicente) quae & Topographia dicitur, partialia quaedam loca seorsum & absolute considerat, absque eorum ad seinuicem, & ad universum telluris ambitum comparatione' (fol. 2r) [Chorography (as Werner) says, is also called topography: it only considers a few sites or particular places in itself and without making any comparison among them with surrounding earth]. In the Antwerp editions the man's binocular view seems well fitted to discern the universal 'ambit' or circle of the worldly sphere as well as the parts its image displays – including sugarloaves that could mark the Caspian Mountains, the Himalayas, the Alps, Pyrenees and the peaks at the source of the Nile (and even tufts of trees along the North African coast).

In the Parisian editions the revised image carries different inflections. The man portrayed, shown in profile, bears resemblance to contemporary images of an easily reproducible image of Christ.<sup>17</sup> He is shown gazing directly at the world-sphere in front of him, that in this instance is a carefully rendered woodcut in which the three continents are named and where 'La Mer Oceane', of more vast proportion, is pocked by the Islands of Taprobana and Madagascar. The two circles in which the world and the man are enclosed set a binocular presence in the frame. Here the Christological or both sanctified and sanctifying figure seems to squint at the world he beholds, thus focusing on what he can be both seeing and reading.<sup>18</sup> Yet, because of the double foci of the two circles, the reader's gaze seems to 'consider and see' what, from his perspective, the sitter could not. If the likeness of the man described is to Christ as it seems, he would be the 'pupil of the eye': but also the personification of the sacred quality of the world as it is both known and unknown. A sense of aura is invested in the comparison of geography (the map of the world) to what contemplates the

<sup>17</sup> Wood C.S. *Forgery, Replica, Fiction* (Chicago: 2008) 155–163, notes that such an image is derived from medallions and that in printed form it obtains a new sense of 'authenticity'.

<sup>18</sup> In a path finding comparison of eyes in Romanesque and Gothic sculpture André Malraux notes that where the former, almost exorbitant, looks outward as if aghast at a cataclysm to come the latter squints the better to locate and measure the proportion of things in his midst; see Malraux A., *Les Voix du silence* (Paris: 1951) 35. Further, Meyer Schapiro observes in *Words and Pictures*, that a relation of power can be implied where the figure in profile cannot return his or her gaze upon the viewer.

latter and at the same time both embodies and discerns topography.

The text that completes the distinction between geography and chorography underlines further the tension that causes the two categories to blur. For (*Car*) Topography (upper case in all editions, thus personified and typified) ‘demonstre toutes les choses & a peu pres les moindres en iceulx lieux contenues, comme sont villes, portz de mer, peuples, pays, cours des rivières, & plusieurs autres choses [semblables], comme edifices, maisons, tours & aultres choses semblables’ (fol. iv r) [displays all things and the slightest that are contained in these places, as are cities, seaports, populations, countries, the course of rivers and a few other similar things, such as buildings, houses, towers and others].<sup>19</sup> The demonstrative or deictic formula (*iceulx*) that would indicate where a place might be – here and not there – contains the places (*lieux*) themselves. Similar (*semblables*) things seem to proliferate by virtue of the similitude. Insofar as contemplation, what goes with the figure of Ptolemy who is usually shown looking skyward, is countered by the horizontal gaze that is suggested to be selective, which is exactly the nature of the operation that informs the juxtaposition of a city-view to an isolated eye and ear. In a very surreal way the reader (and perhaps the man above, no matter whether of secular or sacred aspect) is asked to make an analogy between two types of detail. In the Antwerp editions a wall and fortified town are perched on a hillock over a plain below (a tuft of grass is visible adjacent to the lower left corner of the frame). The area of the rectangle in which it is situated is the same as that in which the broadly hatched figures of the eye and ear float to the right. The words that introduce the image confound the site of the viewer as well as the organs said to perceive the city-view: ‘Et la fin d’icelle [topography] s’accomplit [sera accomplie] en faisant la similitude d’aucuns lieux particuliers, comme si un paintre voulait [voudroict] contrefaire ung seul oeil [oyel], ou une oreille’ (fol. iv r) [and the goal is realized by making the similitude of a few particular places, as a painter might depict a single eye or an

<sup>19</sup> While citing the Paris edition of 1553, I have set between brackets the French of the Antwerp edition of 1544. In Latin: ‘Omnia siquidem ac ferè minima in eis contenta tradit & prosequitur. Velut portus, villas, populos, rivulorum quoque decursus, & quaecunque alia illis finitima, ut sunt aedificia, domus, turrets, moenia, &c’ (fol. 2r).

ear].<sup>20</sup> In the drift between word and image the eye and the ear – *oyel* and *oreille*, the one graphically in and of the other – can be in themselves ‘particular places’, thus perceiving or perceptive sites, and all the more in the confusion of desire and rectitude (*droit* inhabiting *vouldroit*). Areas that are objects of seeing and hearing have the capacity to see and hear. They are at once inanimate and animate.

In the Paris edition the very finely rendered ear and eye are compared to the view of an island-city that floats on a mass of waves. The curvature of the parallel hatching marking the hilly landscape causes the scene to undulate in rhythm with the waters below. The character of an isle and of utopian isolation is so manifest that it marks the eye and the ear to the right: an aural and a visual island become in themselves landscapes of fantasy in which the patient – and contemplative – viewer can get lost. The distinction that might have been so clearly drawn in Ptolemy, and that would be made bolder by virtue of an allegorical or emblematic illustration, is creatively confused.

The detached ear and eye (especially those of the Paris edition) float indeterminately where they are said to be organs of perception. As the comparison with Corrozet implies, they might belong to the recent tradition of the bodily blazon in which poets select an organ in order to fashion a paradoxical or enigmatic encomium of its virtues. Or they can be seen as related to the art of anatomy and therefore of autopsy. They seem to gaze upon and listen to the matter that ‘describes’ them as they are. In their strange detachment the eye and the ear bring to the greater work a fantasy – that could be delightful or frightening – of bodily dismemberment taken to be integral to topography itself. Elsewhere in both the *Cosmographia* and Apian’s *Cosmographia introductio* (1532 and later editions) many of the distinguishing agents in the illustrated matter happen to be detached hands, arms or legs that seem saturated with theological residue. An originary body and mind that animate them are nowhere to be found. Although its parts are topical and conventional the inaugural similitude causes the reader to wonder if the presence of the body in contingent or local space is implied to be opposed to its absence in the cosmographic arena.

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Finis vero eiusdem in effigienda particularis loci similitudine consummabitur: velut si pictor aliquis aurem tantum aut oculum designaret depingeretque’ (fol. 2r).

On cursory glance the bodily parts in the illustrations of the *Cosmographia* seem didactic or even inherited from a tradition of signs and marks common to pedagogical manuals. Yet, in the context of the isolated eye for which the manual is famous, they are the fragments of what is implied to be a topographic body. If, too, as the hatching depicting the pupil of Apian's eye easily reveals, the ocular organ resembles a globe striated with lines of latitude and longitude, the greater world is found in its parts. Such was what was inferred from the comparison of the snail to the eye in Corrozet's emblem, and such is what Apian and Gemma Frisius develop in the short but telling work that ties the faculty of perception and vision to a new and vital study of our relations with space and place.

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# THE ETHNOGRAPHIC LENS IN THE NEW WORLD: STADEN, DE BRY, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE TUPI IN BRAZIL

Neil L. Whitehead

## *Introduction*

In this chapter I use the works of Hans Staden and Theodor de Bry as exemplars of how visual tropes were established and traveled in the early accounts of the New World and how those visual forms have created an ethnographic lens that has persisted into contemporary modern depictions. To this end consideration is also given to the work of Candido Portinari the modernist Brazilian painter and a graphic novel version of Staden's story.<sup>1</sup>

Hans Staden's *Warhaftige Historia*, or the *True History*, produces and reflects a spectacle of anthropophagy in both textual and graphic forms that was certainly significant for his immediate audience, in a way analogous to how the drama of ritual sacrifice for the Tupi was connected to its qualities as public spectacle [Fig. 1].<sup>2</sup> The anthropophagic spectacle the *True History* presents also sustains a contemporary significance which has led to various re-workings of Staden's graphic materials, thereby re-inscribing the *True History*, and the cannibalistic sacrificial performance it displays, into contemporary cultural consciousness.

The *True History* could be considered an exceptionally important work, just for these reasons alone, as there is no other visual record of this era that is so extensive or so closely inter-related to textual description.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay will not broach issues of philology and languages, as there is extensive existing scholarship on these matters: see Jantz H., "Amerika im deutschen Dichten und Denken", in Stammeler W. (ed.), *Deutsche Philologie im Aufriss, III* (1962) 309–372; Neuber W., *Fremde Welt im europäischen Horizont. Zur Topik der deutschen Amerika-Reiseberichte der Frühen Neuzeit [Philologische Studien und Quellen 121]* (Berlin: 1991); as well as Franz Obermeier's new German language edition of Staden's text, *Warhaftige Historia: zwei Reisen nach Brasilien 1548–1555* (Kiel: 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia und beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der Wilden, Nacketen, Grimmigen Menschfresser Leuthen, in der Newenwelt America gelegen* (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557); all further citations are taken from Whitehead N.L. – Harbsmeier M. (eds.), *Hans Staden's True History. An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil* (Durham – London: 2008).



Fig. 1. The Youngster's Feast, plate 54. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 136. Duke University.

There is also a performative aspect to the *True History*, consisting in the interplay of oral, textual and image forms, that marks it out as a notable example of early modern print culture itself, for which there was no necessary opposition between, or positivistic superiority of, the literary over the oral. Moreover, the relationship between 'images' and 'facts' in Staden's day was likewise understood as one of an epistemological equity, since some facts, particularly those of the eye-witness, are only present through their imaging and re-presentation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As Peter Parshall notes in "*Imago Contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern*

Highly popular single leaf woodcuts circulated widely in sixteenth-century Germany and Marburg – where Staden's work was first published – was a notable center for their production. These broadsheets and their subject matter therefore formed Staden's visual culture in which the *True History's* images of bodily dismemberment and ritual anthropophagy would not have been shocking and troublesome in quite the ways we might anticipate. The nature of this popular material, which Staden himself must have seen on many occasions, suggests that reactions to depictions of Tupi sacrifice could not have simply been ones of shock and horror at the bodily destruction since this was staple fare of these woodcuts. As Staden himself told Alkindar, one of his captors: 'It is terrible that you eat them [your enemies]. Killing them is not so horrible [...]'.<sup>4</sup>

The subject matter of these single-leaf woodcuts was at times far more gruesome and shocking than anything that appears in the *True History* and also reveals the mentality of the time as unlikely to have found the heavenly portents, signs and wonders, human cruelty, savagery and violence, and physical difference illustrated in the *True History* remarkable as such. The woodcuts included such scenes as the execution and dismemberment of a werewolf, the appearance of celestial anomalies over various cities and the presentation of monstrous human births and deformed animals and plants.<sup>5</sup> In which case the possibility of celestial vision and heavenly revelation, or the exercise of Staden's weather magic in compelling the clouds, taken by the Tupi as direct evidence of his shamanic ability if not the existence of a Christian God, would not have appeared improbable to the audience of the day [Fig. 2].

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Renaissance", *Art History* 16 (1993) 555: '[...] in the sixteenth century the importance of artistic invention migrated to the centre of critical debate, and in certain circles the classical model of *mimesis* came to be reformulated in such a way that for a time the operations of art and nature were paralleled to one another and their separate products esteemed on similar and equal terms'. With regard to this process, Parshall further suggests (560–564) that the German-speaking regions of Europe were particularly significant, the authority of the eye-witness was crucial, and the aesthetic form of the printed image was likewise very important. Notably the phrase *warhafftig ab counterfeit* indicated the epistemological status of the image, and the textual accompaniment insisted constantly upon the image's veracity, as in Staden's *True History*.

<sup>4</sup> Staden, *True History* 75.

<sup>5</sup> A wonderful collection of these woodcuts is reproduced in Geisberg M., *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, ed. W.L. Strauss, 4 vols. (New York: 1974) and Strauss W.L., *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1550–1600*, 3 vols. (New York: 1975).



Fig. 2. The Weather Shaman, plate 16. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 53. Duke University.

At the same time the constant re-presentation of the abnormal, deviant and pathological functioned to delineate the space of the human in this world of proliferating monstrosity and marvel, that proliferation being as much an outcome of the expansion of printing technologies as it was the encounter with exotic cannibals in America. The 'truth' of the images circulating in Staden's cultural milieu was, as Parshall (1993: 565) suggests: 'Literal, sensory and empirical [...] not the generalized truth [...] meant to reflect a natural and mathematically describable order. On the contrary, these broadsheets of strange and unfamiliar

things record a particular instance, a tear in the fabric of that order, a deviation from it'.<sup>6</sup> As Parshall suggests then, the emphasis given to eye-witnessing of preternatural and supernatural events was an important strategy for demystifying the bizarre and extraordinary since both skeptic and believers accepted that sensory apprehension was a final measure of truth. Moreover, as is evident from the *True History* and Dryander's preamble to Staden's tale, in the Protestant circles of the time both mystical and skeptical impulses were present and the place of personal testimonial had gained a new prominence.

This emphasis on testimonies of faith, precisely the literary form of the *True History*, was an important source of propaganda, paralleling a theological emphasis on the direct testimony of the scriptures. For these reasons the eye-witnessing of events was crucial to their 'truth' so that the supposition must be that if Staden did not himself actually make the wood blocks he had a direct hand in guiding the process,<sup>7</sup> as indeed the illustrations themselves suggest through his constant eye-witnessing presence in the images and the complexity and detail of event they present.<sup>8</sup>

However the mystical truths of Protestant faith relied ultimately on the spiritual and moral condition of the witness known only to their god, whereas empirical truths of the material world and scientific world were ultimately decided by the very absence and transparency of the eye-witness observer. These tensions between forms of meaning and eye-witnessing are fully present in the *True History* and to the modernist, rationalist mind are in apparent contradiction. Someone like Staden who credits the moon with a portentous and ominous significance in its appearance, or believes he can cure illness through God's

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<sup>6</sup> Parshall, "*Imago Contrafacta*" 565.

<sup>7</sup> Although Dryander clearly employed a better block maker for his 1542 publication *Der Gantzen Artzenei*, he remarks in his Introduction: 'His intention is both honorable and fitting – if this were not so, he would surely have spared himself this time-consuming effort and labor, and the considerable expense of printing this work and cutting the blocks [for the woodcuts]'.

<sup>8</sup> Parshall, "*Imago Contrafacta*" 566, also indicates that as various civil and ecclesiastical authorities tried to censor such productions for both factual accuracy and religious and political propriety, judgments were increasingly made, from the 1530's onwards, on the basis of '[...] verifiability by sensory means, and eye-witness accounts became the legitimate test of their genuineness'. Hence the relevance of Dryander's introduction to the *True History*, stressing the eye-witness status of Staden in the matters he describes.

providence, cannot at the same time be expected to report with ethnological objectivity on the ritual practices of the exotic Tupi. Since complex human actions, 'events' are already theatrical, performed in the sense of both being witnessed and being for witnessing, the strongly visual medium of 'theater' in turn functioned to re-create, or 'stage' them again, for contemplation, as in a *tableau vivant* or other public spectacles and re-enactments. There were probably some seventy such fêtes featuring 'America' in theatrical form throughout Europe between 1492 and 1700.

### *Hans Staden's Illustrations*

In its time the *True History* therefore did not present itself as problematic for the reasons we might suspect, such as the presence of artifice in the act of representation, and its supposed sensationalism in the depiction of violent cannibalism, hardly unique given the contents of other popular publications. Moreover, there is every reason then to think that Hans Staden was, as he claimed, an observing participant to the events he relates and there are other contextual reasons for thinking that he had direct role in producing the woodcut illustrations, principally the close interconnection of text and graphics, but also the frequent visual presence of Staden himself and the fact that there were no other significant visual catalogues to which the wood block maker might refer.<sup>9</sup> However, it was not the first work to offer visual images of the Tupi, and the remote, if unlikely, possibility remains that the images were taken from some other sources.<sup>10</sup> Comparison of the *Warhaftige Historia's* illustrative materials with earlier depictions of Brazilian peoples would suggest this was not the case.

The earliest depictions of Brazilian natives appear on maps, such as that known as the 'Kunstmann II' map of ca. 1502, notoriously

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<sup>9</sup> The various *tableau vivants* already discussed could conceivably have supplied visual tropes for Brazilian Indians, but it is striking that the representational aesthetic present in the *True History* is quite different from other woodcuts of the time.

<sup>10</sup> It should be emphasized that the modern sin of 'plagiarism' is connected to historically and culturally specific ideas of individual creativity and the financial economics of creative production in a world of copyright law and massive investment in networks of distribution by recording companies, publishers and retailers. In Staden's day the issues were less prominent and focused more on depiction and discussion of natural phenomena. As Parshall notes in "*Imago Contrafacta*" 56: 'How can one be accused of copying what is, after all, simply the face of nature itself?'

depicting a scene of cannibalism and likely relating to the description of an incident in the voyages of Amerigo Vespucci whose letters more generally supplied the source for a number of Florentine, Dutch and German wood cuts depicting the people of the New World. In 1505 a German illustration, that paraphrased lines from Vespucci's letters in the caption, appeared and gained a much wider currency (Sturtevant 1976: 420, fig. 2). It depicts a group of male and female natives, attired in feather-work with human heads and limbs hung to smoke over a fire in their shelter, while others gnaw on human appendages. Certainly this is a sign that 'America' is being proclaimed through the imagery of 'cannibalism' and the feathered costumes likewise recall the early observations made in Brazil, but there is little aesthetic connection with the style of the *True History* and certainly far less useful detail, other than of de-contextualized items of dress and weaponry. This is also the case for subsequent renderings, including woodcuts done in 1516–1519 by Hans Burgkmair of the *tableau vivant* for Emperor Maximilian I's Triumph, the drawing in 1515 of a Tupi man by Albrecht Dürer for Maximilian's prayer-book, and the 'Miller Atlas' of 1519 which shows feathered Tupi with weapons and other collecting wood for trade with the Europeans.<sup>11</sup> Other maps that pre-date Staden's account do occasionally depict Brazilian natives but these could hardly have been a resource for the fifty-three separate figures that appear in the *Warhaftige Historia*, even in the case of the Jean Rotz map which has a detailed depiction of a fortified Tupi village and groups of battling warriors. In short, the *True History* visually explodes onto the sixteenth century scene, vastly increasing the visual repertoire for depictions of native Brazilians, and bringing to those repertoire new elements that are in turn taken up by other illustrators. The accuracy of those depictions in representing what other and later sources also indicate was the appearance and custom of the Tupi likewise suggests that, whatever the imaginative elements or 'artifice' to these depictions, they nonetheless refract aspects of a real experience.

<sup>11</sup> Honour H., *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from Discoveries to the Present Time* (New York: 1975), reproduces and discusses many of these illustrations. William Sturtevant reproduces and discusses many of these illustrations, providing a very useful, if incomplete, survey of the earliest images of indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and South America; see Sturtevant W., "First Visual Images of Native America", in Chiappelli F. (ed.), *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (Berkeley: 1976) 417–454.

The notion of refraction rather than the more strict idea of reflection is appropriate here since it allows for the intrusion of imagination in a way that need not entail a supposition of falsehood or systematic deception in the illustrations.<sup>12</sup> There is also a very tight correlation between the narration of the text, the positioning of the woodcuts and the content of the woodcuts themselves which suggests that an intimate familiarity with the contents of the narrative would have been required to compose and design the woodcuts.<sup>13</sup> However, any visual sign of bodily intimacy is remarkably absent from Staden's account. The potential sexuality of Tupi nakedness, despite the emphatic depiction in text and illustrations of male and female nakedness, as well as the discursive importance of Staden's own nudity, the physical intimacy of his captivity inside the Tupi long-house, the sexual behavior of the Tupi, and his own sexual attitudes, are never overtly discussed or alluded to by Staden. Rather, the nakedness of Staden himself visually and textually functions to emphasize his helplessness, not the sexually threatening presence of the Tupi, manifestly implicit though such meanings are in his predicament.

This visual quality must therefore be understood as part of the self-presentation of Staden and the limits of his ethnological ambition, which is certainly secondary to the didactic purposes of his text.<sup>14</sup> Given the close interplay of narrative and visual depiction in the *True History*, this recognition underlines the need to consider its broader discursive properties, in which an emphatic naïveté and powerlessness is crucial to the meaning of God's ultimate redemption. The key motif

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<sup>12</sup> A similar approach was taken by Whitehead in Whitehead N.L. (ed., annot, transc.), *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana by Sir Walter Raleigh* (Manchester and Norman: 1998); this account was also subject to immediate and persistent accusations that it was a purely imaginative or fictional work.

<sup>13</sup> Figs. 17–18 and 30 are repeated in Part II of the work appearing as figs. 44–45 and 39.

<sup>14</sup> On the broad influence of the medieval *passio* on the literary form of the *True History*, see TenHuisen D.E.R., "Providence and *Passio* in Hans Staden's *Wahrhaftig Historia*", *Daphnis* 34 (2005) 213–254, esp. 215: 'As with other early modern chronicles, the hagiographic discourse in *True History* is often ignored or dismissed as merely fictitious or artificial by contemporary readers, relegating the religious language, biblical allusions, and miracles to unconvincing attempts on the part of the author to manipulate his readers. The influence of hagiography, however, cannot be disregarded. In fact, hagiographic language is the principal lens through which Staden both frames and interprets his experience, and the discourse of martyrdom also determines his view of the indigenous peoples that he encounters'. Also see Obermeier, *Warhaftige Historia* 54ff.



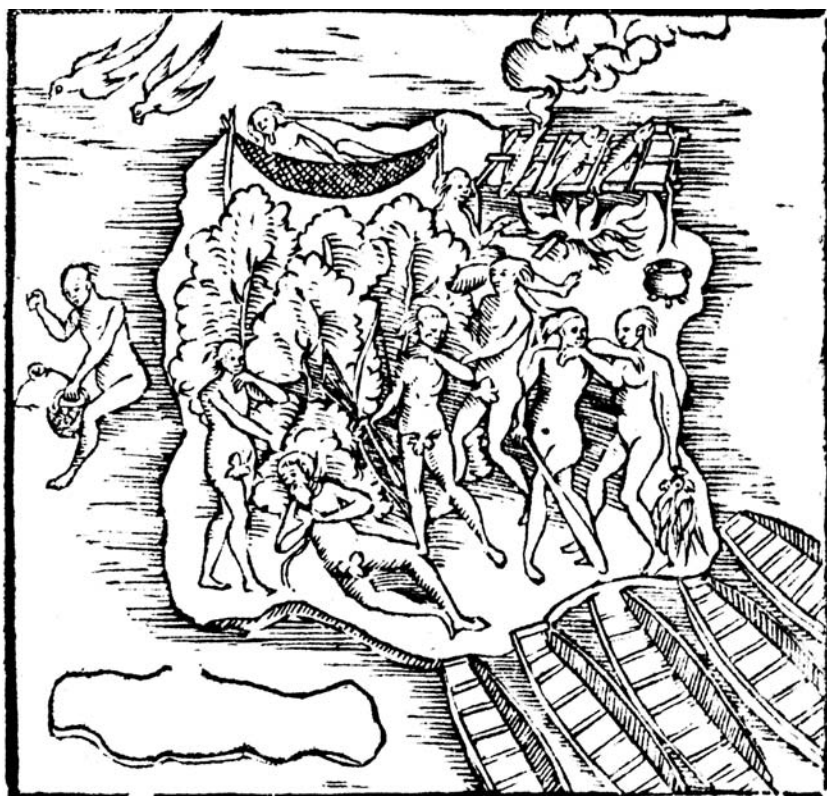


Fig. 3. The Bound Animal, plate 15. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 52. Duke University.

that buttresses this authenticating naïveté in Staden's text is therefore that of nakedness, read as both a physical and moral condition.

Hans is stripped naked on capture [Fig. 3] and on reaching the village where he was to be kept, Uwattibi, Hans was further stripped of his cultural personality by having his eyebrows removed, but Staden vigorously resists the removal of his beard – 'But a few days later, they cut it off with a pair of scissors, which the Frenchmen had given to them'.<sup>15</sup>

One almost feels that he might have added 'specifically for this purpose', since they also took him 'naked as I was' to see the treacherous

<sup>15</sup> Staden, *True History* 56.

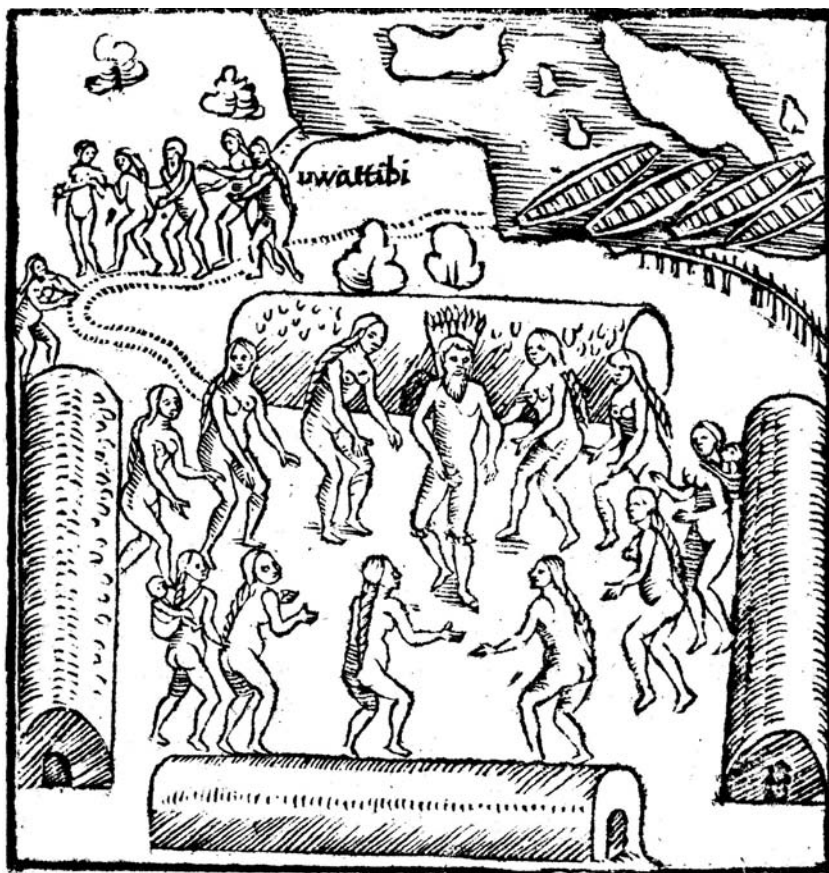


Fig. 4. The Arrival at Uwatibbi – Aprasse Dance, plate 17. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 56. Duke University.

French trader.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Staden contemptuously strips off even further: 'On my shoulders I had a piece of linen cloth, which they had given me [...] because the sun had burnt me severely. I tore this off and flung it at the Frenchman's feet, saying to myself: if I then have to die, why then should I preserve my flesh any longer for others?'<sup>17</sup>

Staden appears naked in all the woodcuts illustrating his captivity, except that he retains his beard and long hair [Fig. 4]. This in turn suggests

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

allusion to the Biblical trials of Jeremiah with whom Staden overtly identifies through direct quotation.<sup>18</sup> Certainly then, the semeiosis of the hairy nakedness of Staden, the clothed bodies of the French [Fig. 5], and the feathered nakedness of the Tupi, are important visual counter-points. As a result it is the manner of nakedness that establishes the boundaries between Tupi, German and Frenchman, just as the manner of cannibalistic incorporation establishes these differences by reference to ritual proclivity.

In both Europe and Brazil a spectacular anthropophagy, which is at once semiophagic and semio-vestiary, is therefore central to the production of ritual meaning. Nonetheless, as de-contextualized realistic depictions or portraits the images do not make visual sense, not because of lack of perspectival rigor or aesthetic schooling, but because they are part of the text and are narrated by the text even as they depict that narrative. The images therefore cannot stand alone and are not self-explanatory but require the narrative of the text to decode both the nature of an event and the sequence of events that occur in them. Some images are spatial frames depicting a single object or event for contemplation, others are temporal, in that they show a sequence of events narrated in the text, similar to way in which comic book frames work: as is confirmed by a recent graphic novel version of Staden's account in this style.

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<sup>18</sup> Staden first quotes Jeremiah after the French trader, Karwattuware, refuses to say he is not Portuguese and encourages the Tupi to sacrifice him: 'Then I remembered the saying in Jeremiah Chapter XVII [17,5] where he says: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals' [*True History* 60]. According to TenHuisen, "Providence and passio" 18–20: 'Staden's response follows the narrative strategy of quoting one line and allowing his audience to recall the appropriateness of the whole. He extends the lessons Jeremiah learns while in captivity with the Babylonians to his own experience. By placing his hope for escape in the Frenchman, Staden is like the shrub in the desert (who puts his trust in man), rather than the tree by the water (who trusts in God). And the crucial concept of God's anger, introduced in this psalm, extends to Staden as well: "Through your own fault you will lose the inheritance I gave you I will enslave you to your enemies in a land you do not know, for you have kindled my anger, and it will burn for ever". [...] But ultimately, the closing of the Psalm reiterates the image of Staden as stalwart in his faith and suggests the direction of the narrative to come. That is, God will reward the faithful and punish the wicked. [...] This lesson carries with it the directive to maintain alterity and construct barriers between self and Other. Israel can only receive God's grace as long as she refuses to take on the culture of the Babylonians. Thus in order for Staden to receive God's mercy he must resist the Other as godless and barbaric. Although Staden, like Jeremiah, has been punished in captivity, Staden demonstrates that the Tupinambá mock God as well as Staden. As the enemy of God, the Tupinambá are the true Other'.



Fig. 5. The Marie Ballete Refuses Staden, plate 25. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 83. Duke University.

A good example of the former would be the images illustrating material culture, the *ini* or hammock, male adornments, the feather ruff *enduap*, the flesh-eating rattle *tamaraka*, the executioner's club *iwera pemme*, and the labrets that men wore [Fig. 6].<sup>19</sup> Except for the portrait of Tuppin Imba warriors and the frontispiece of a reclining cannibal,<sup>20</sup> all the other illustrations are of unfolding events, Staden's own capture and

<sup>19</sup> Staden, *True History*, figs. 41–43, 46.

<sup>20</sup> Id., figs. 34 and 1.

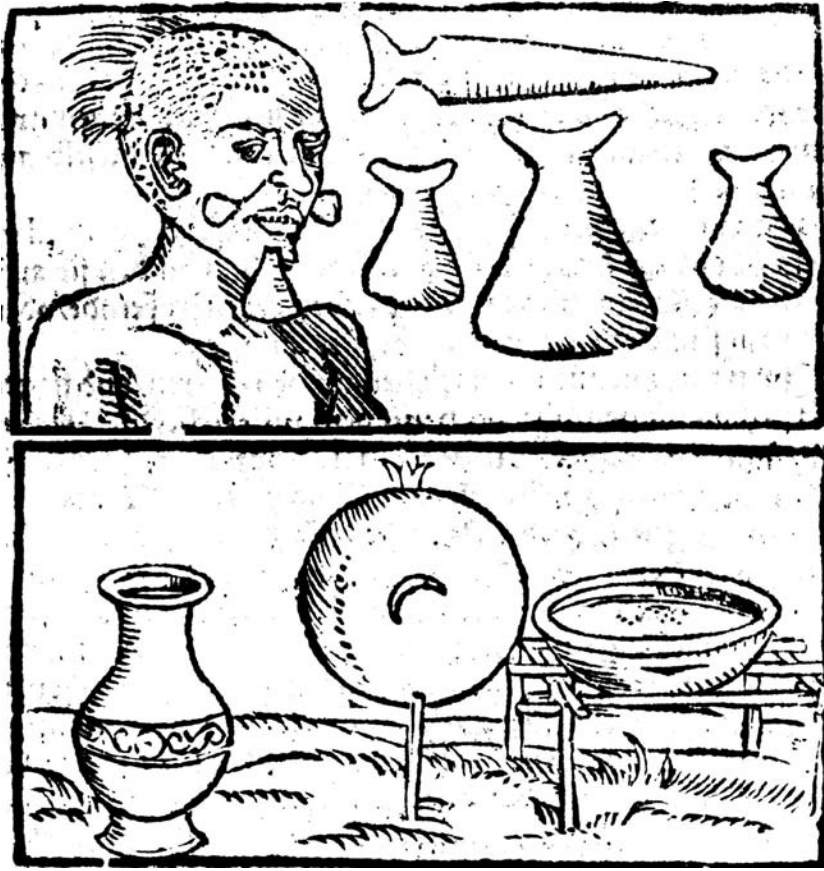


Fig. 6. Male Adornment and the Tammaraka, plates 41 and 43. Woodcut illustrations to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 120, 124. Duke University.

transport to the village of Uwatibbi, various battles among natives and colonizers, the phases of sacrificial ritual, subsistence activities, and various acts of magic, prophecy and providence.

For example, *The Death of the Cario Slave* perfectly illustrates the dynamic and sequential quality of the way in which the illustrations work visually [Fig. 7].<sup>21</sup> The frame should be read from the top right hand corner where Staden attempts to heal the sick slave – down and to

<sup>21</sup> Id., fig. 7.



Fig. 7. The Death of the Cario Slave, plate 24. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia [...]* (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 80. Duke University.

the left where the slave is nonetheless executed – down and to the right where Staden appears again denouncing the killing and warning against eating the slave – ending in the bottom right hand corner with the vignette of the child washing the skull of the slave. The illustrations are therefore very heavily ‘con-textual’ and later de-contextualizations, as with those widely promulgated by Théodore de Bry (1592) and discussed below, have negatively affected later evaluations of Staden’s textual account itself.

As mentioned before, and unsurprisingly in view of the way it is discussed in the text, his long beard marks Staden visually among the



Fig. 8. The Speech of Konyan Bebe to his Hopping Food, plate 19. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 63. Duke University.

crush of Tupi bodies,<sup>22</sup> as does a cruciform cross on his chest and his initials 'HS'.<sup>23</sup> Staden's continuous presence in that intimate mass of Tupi bodies, composed of women and children as well as warriors, thus visually underlines his authorial presence and eyewitness status [Fig. 8].<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., figs. 13–25, 30–31, 44–45. Despite his depiction of himself with a beard in all the illustrations in fact the beard was removed after his initial protests.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., figs. 26 and 54.

<sup>24</sup> Life-size cardboard figures of Staden and his hosts, apparently exhibited for the first time in São Paulo in 1954 on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of that city, can now be found at the museum in Wollhagen, on which see Fouquet K., "Hans Staden von Brasilien aus gesehen", *Hessische Heimat* 5 (1956) 9.

The woodcuts also function as iconic signs as much as visual representations, since the visual elements of the illustrative 'text' of the woodcut in turn encode cultural references for difference and similarity, natural phenomena, and so forth. These may be summarized into various categories:

- 1) Indications of cosmological and celestial presences shown through stars, suns, moons, winds, clouds, and rain,
- 2) the cultural-organic where the presence and positioning of hair, skulls, parrots, cormorants and ibis birds signal indigenous or colonial cultural affiliations, and
- 3) the cultural-technical signaling difference through canoes, long houses, palisades, pots, rattles, labrets, clubs, and bows/arrows, or masted ships, cannon shot, clothing, guns, crosses [Fig. 9].<sup>25</sup>

In turn various visual conventions govern the deployment of these signs, most strikingly being the convention for a shock or air wave, as in the firing of cannons or blowing of trumpets.

### *De Bry's Version*

The vivacity and complexity of the visual depictions in Staden's work are reflected in the fact that they were copied into durable copperplate engravings by Theodor de Bry, who thereby 'elevat[ed] the illustrations into a new technical and artistic dimension';<sup>26</sup> the plates were also often hand-colored. De Bry offered twenty-eight copperplate engravings in place of the fifty woodcut images in the *True History* and so virtually halved the amount of visual imagery present in the originals. Although elements of the visual organization of the original

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<sup>25</sup> Especially the scene in fig. 35, a palisaded village, devoid of all life and suggesting the stark severity and aesthetic regularity of the indigenous art of war. The layout of the composition is detailed and accurate, and the skulls lining the entrance passage completes the intimidating vision.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander M., *Discovering the New World* (London: 1976) 90, suggests that this was also done since the original woodcuts would not have been adequate for long print runs. For general discussions of de Bry's collections and printmaking practices, see Keazor H., "Theodore de Bry's Images for 'America'", *Print Quarterly* 15 (1998) 131–149; and Bucher B., *Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages*, trans. Gulati B. (Chicago: 1981).





Fig. 9. The Battle with the French at Buttugaris, plate 8. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 29. Duke University.

images was directly transposed into de Bry's versions,<sup>27</sup> in general this process altered the content of those images and, despite the greater

<sup>27</sup> In particular, the perspectival angles which allowed a map-like depiction of bays, channels, and islands (figs. 12–14, compare de Bry 1592: 7 and 122, 10 and 96, 18, 14 and 21, 24 and 26, 34, 37), as well as the massing of Tupi canoes (figs. 13, 15, 20, 29, compare de Bry 1592: 37, 41, 66 and 120, 78 and 208) and the stark symmetry of their long-houses and palisades (figs. 17–22, 35, compare de Bry 1592: 41, 43, 52). In the 1592 edition, the twenty-eight plates adapted from woodcuts in the *True History* are embedded within a larger series including material not from Staden, and they are numbered as indicated.

aesthetic artistry in de Bry's copper plates, the sense of movement and action that is so apparent in the less accomplished originals becomes stylized and even wooden in a way the woodcuts are not. In particular de Bry's versions made visual suggestions of uncontrolled and depraved female sexuality, child-abuse and satanic witchcraft.<sup>28</sup> Anthropophagic sacrifice became a scene of monstrous excess and an intense, if mannered, atmosphere of casual and gruesome violence was grafted onto Staden's original tale. As a result, much that was precise and particular in Staden's original renderings was lost or suppressed in the versions by de Bry, which also fractured the close inter-relation of text and image that is such a notable feature of the *True History*.

For example, the imagery of life-draining *succuba* and witch cannibalism of the innocent becomes prominent in the representation of female participation in ritual sacrifice, as will be readily apparent in a comparison of fig. 53 in the *True History* with de Bry's reworking of the scene (1592, 66, 128).<sup>29</sup> De Bry's version overtly sexualizes the posture of the woman in the bottom left of the scene by placing one of her hands in her crotch and imparting an unbridled sensuality to the licking of her own erect finger, suggesting both fellatio and masturbation as accompaniment to this cannibal debauchery. In a similar vein, fig. 52 [Fig. 10] in the *True History* shows the dismemberment of the corpse of the sacrificial victim which, in both text and image, is clearly marked as a male prerogative, but in de Bry (1592, 126 and 213) there is a complete inversion and it is the women who carry out this role. De Bry also gratuitously adds a visual element that was only textually present in the *True History*, showing the women suggestively plugging the anus of the victim before he is placed on the cooking fire.

However, the overall effect of these changes and redactions is to double the visual register for the sign of cannibalism. By these means De Bry inflates and changes the role of the women in ways that were no doubt designed to appeal to the more salacious proclivities of his audience,<sup>30</sup> no less than they might fulfill desires to discern a justification for colonial enterprise and conquest of the savages. Nonetheless it has been the De Bry illustrations that have perennially attracted

<sup>28</sup> Bucher, *Icon and Conquest* 46–64, elaborates on this trope within de Bry's reworking, and offers a Structuralist analysis of the interrelation among gender, age, and cannibal proclivity in his copperplates.

<sup>29</sup> De Bry, 66, 128.

<sup>30</sup> See note 18.

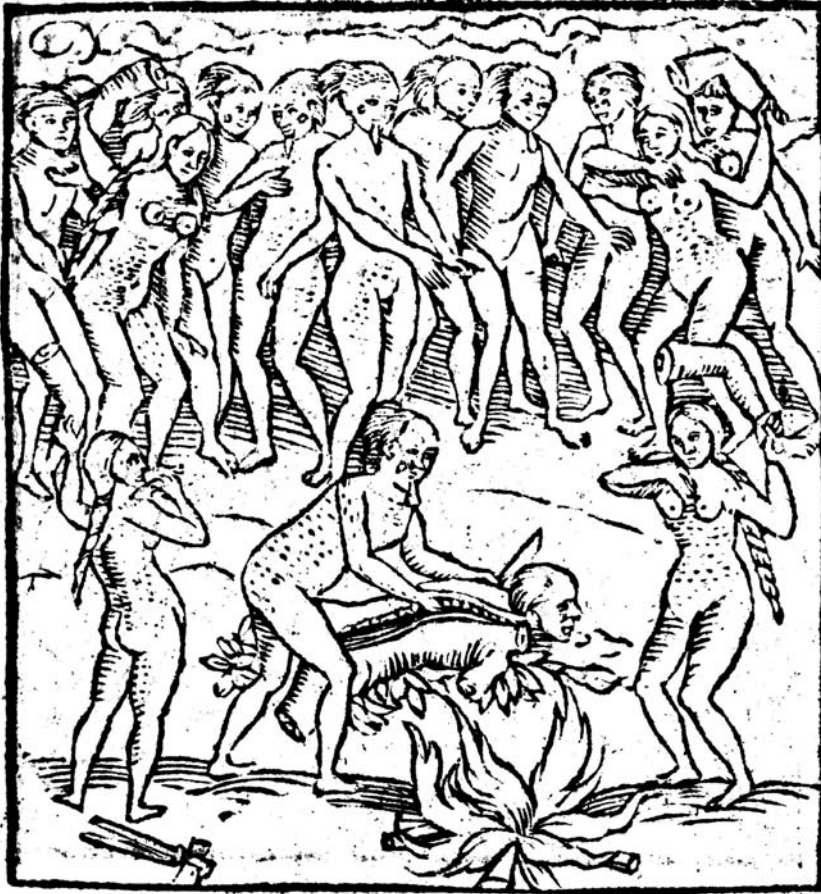


Fig. 10. The Dismemberment of the Flayed Body by the Men, plate 52. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia [...]* (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 135. Duke University.

editors and publishers, and so obscured the valuable content of the original woodcuts to subsequent commentators, who have relied on the presence of illustrations as expressions of the first hand experience of Staden, but carelessly conflated them with the De Bry's versions.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Such is the case with Lestringant F. (ed.), *Cannibals* (Berkeley: 1997) 56–57, which appears to treat de Bry as a source independent of Staden, and somewhat misleadingly suggests that A. Thevet's illustration in *Les Singularitez de la France Antarctique* (Paris, Heritiers de Maurice de la Porte: 1557), adds details not present in Staden's

This also has more than a visual consequence since it affects the reading of the text which is so closely intertwined with the wood-cuts. De Bry erases all visual references to marvels, wonders, shamanic healing and prophecy by Staden, and in particular the crucial incident where Staden tells his captors that the moon is angry with then, causing the first of many subsequent hesitations in their dealings with their strange captive.

What might have prompted Staden to so refer to the moon is impossible to say, but it certainly elided easily with Tupi notions of the presence of celestial bodies in human affairs. Since the incident is indeed followed by epidemic sickness among the Tupi their circumspection only bloats further as Staden also then cures them of the very sickness he openly suggest was sent by 'his' god. The woodcut illustrating this scene is among the most visually dense and even resorts to a speech bubble to reinforce the significance of the event – *O my Lord and God, help me out of this misery to a bright [happy] end* [Fig. 11]. In view of the visual erasure of this critical incident, the weight of anticipation and attention, enhanced further by the overall reduction from the original fifty-five figures to twenty-eight figures, given to cannibalistic, even orgiastic, propensities among the Tupi is magnified to the point that it becomes an iconic cipher for historical Tupi identity – the original *antropofagistas* indeed. One other notable erasure is the de-personalization of the Tupi, who often appear as individual agents in Staden's account, as in the case Konyan Bebe. This occlusion of the Tupi as heterogeneous agents allows a generalized savage cannibalism to emerge and the cultural gulf between European and Tupi is widened. Equally, interstitial figures that disrupt these emergent categories of civilized and savage are also erased. For example, in de Bry's (1592, 47) reworking of the illustration of the French trading ship which visited Uwatibbi (*True History*,

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text, such as the use of the *boucan* and the cooking of the entrails and the head. In fact these details do appear in other woodcuts in the Staden series, though not in the particular illustration from the *True History* he reproduces – see figs. 24, 26, 28, 47, 53 and 54. Menninger A., *Die Macht der Augenzeugen. Neue Welt und Kannibalen-Mythos, 1492–1600* (Stuttgart: 1995) 209–219, esp. 216, also discusses what Thevet appears to have added to Staden, both in the text and in the illustrations of *Les Singularitez*. She concludes that three features in particular – the wife who gives herself over to mourning once 'her' prisoner has been killed, the small children who are smeared with the blood of the victim to strengthen them, and the women taken as prisoners who are put to work as slaves in the field – all make use of a standard repertoire of popular images of the barbarian savage.



Fig. 11. The Angry Moon, plate 21. Woodcut illustration to Hans Staden's *Warhaftig[e] Historia* [...] (Marburg, Kolbe: 1557) 66. Duke University.

fig. 25), the French crew now seem to be trying to haul Staden on board, rather than shove him away and abandon him as they did.<sup>32</sup>

The embroilment of native peoples in inter-colonial struggles, and the nature of such conflicts themselves, is thus masked by this generalized and supervening picture of savagery and cannibalism, obscuring the real violence of a colonialism that utterly eradicated the Tupi

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Staden, *True History*, fig. 25, and De Bry, *Americae tertia pars*, fig. 47.

through warfare and disease.<sup>33</sup> Thus particular events are theatricalized to the point of becoming passive signs not active signifiers,<sup>34</sup> prohibiting the threatening instabilities and uncertainties of Staden's tale from disturbing his induction into the canon of colonial experience, not as a man redeemed, but rather as the Cannibal Conqueror par excellence.

### Conclusion

By way of conclusion I want to reference not just early but also contemporary modern eyes and their gaze on Staden. Thus a notable reworking and reinterpretation of Staden's visual record was made in the 1940's by Candido Portinari, the Brazilian modernist, for a projected but never completed American edition of the *True History*.<sup>35</sup> Here, unlike with de Bry, the reworking is entirely overt, being in a thoroughly modernist style, and seeks the aesthetic and emotive truths conveyed through the *True History*. The images convey the way in which Portinari was inspired by the story of Staden and also how he

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<sup>33</sup> The Tupi were classic examples of an indigenous people caught in the tribal zone of colonial intrusion, on which see Whitehead N.L., "Tribes Make States and States Make Tribes – Warfare and the Creation of Colonial Tribe and State in Northeastern South America", in Ferguson R.B. – Whitehead N.L. (eds.), *War in the Tribal Zone. Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (London – Santa Fe: 1999). Encapsulated by the progressive encroachment of permanent colonial settlement and fortification, the Tupinambá, Tupinikin, and other ethnic formations of coastal Brazil were inevitably drawn into the politics of colonial rivalry. The war-complex on which Staden reports was thereby deeply affected and its purposes and practices subtly intensified and altered to accommodate their alliances with the various European factions; see *ibid.* for a particular account of this process in Brazil. On this process in South America and the Caribbean more generally, see Whitehead N.L., "The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies (1492–1580) – The Caribbean", in Salomon F. – Schwartz S. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Native American Peoples* III (1) (Cambridge: 1999) 864–903; *idem*, "Lowland Peoples Confront Colonial Regimes in Northern South America", in Salomon F. – Schwartz S. (eds.), *The Cambridge History* III (2) (Cambridge: 1999) 382–441; and *idem*, "Native Society and the European Occupation of the Caribbean Islands and Coastal Tierra Firme, 1492–1650", in Damas C. – Emmer P. (eds.), *A General History of the Caribbean* (London: 1999) 180–200.

<sup>34</sup> Parshall, "Imago Contrafacta" 572, characterizes such borrowing and changing as legitimate for compilers like de Bry for whom it is likely that '[...] the identity of the primary witness is no longer as important as the self-sufficiency of that which is witnessed'. In the seventeenth century Baconian epistemology proposed that proper scientific observation would require the progressive elimination of the variables associated with the observer.

<sup>35</sup> Paris M.-L. – Ohtake R., *Portinari Devora Hans Staden* (São Paulo: 1998).

saw it as a human tale still relevant to contemporary Brazilians. Portinari sometimes simply redrew a version of an original illustration as in his composition 'Barco e peixes' which elegantly and sparingly recalls fig. 4 of the *True History* showing the departure of Staden's ship from Lisbon on his first journey to Brazil.

In general Portinari appears to have borrowed both overall layout and perspectives, as well as specific figures and motifs from the originals, particularly the impaled skulls, village palisades, and perching parrots, but was selective in the repeating the tableau of events as laid out in the *True History*. Most strikingly the figure of Staden himself is now turned to face out of the picture with arms raised as if to beseech us to rescue him. Significantly, in view of the kind of erasures made by de Bry, the celestial presence of the sun and an angry moon, as well as the figure of Konyan Bebe, are re-introduced.

Staden's account has also recently been realized as a comic book, or graphic novel, by Jô Oliveira (2005), in which many of the iconic scenes of the original illustrations are re-drawn or re-worked.<sup>36</sup> The visual power of the original illustrations is again testified to by the way in which certain visual elements, his nakedness, the impaled skulls, the palisaded village, the massed canoes, the butchery of the corpse, are transposed even into this contemporary version. These various modern interrogations of the visual elements of Staden's text speak to its continuing visual power [...] an early modern eye certainly but one which it seems we still share culturally for the way in which our own obsessions, no doubt inherited in part from that originating colonial moment, and which are still answered by Staden's baleful gaze over the now-vanished Tupi.

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<sup>36</sup> Oliveira J., *Hans Staden. Um Aventureiro no Novo Mundo* (São Paulo: 2005).

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## DEPICTING PERSPECTIVE: THE RETURN OF THE GAZE IN CODEX TELLERIANO-REMENSIS (C. 1563)

José Rabasa

Folio 46r of Codex Telleriano-Remensis [Fig. 1] may be read in terms of the fragments that compose it as well as in terms of a unity that conveys a connection between the apparently disconnected scenes.<sup>1</sup> The unity is in part the result of the limits imposed by the surface on which the pictographs were painted. Contrary to traditional pre-Colombian codices that were either painted on a folding screen, a *lienzo* (cloth), or a *tira* (linear strip), Telleriano-Remensis is painted on the page of a book.<sup>2</sup> The codex, as the structure of the page indicates, is a new

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<sup>1</sup> See Quiñones Keber E. (ed.), *Codex Telleriano-Remensis: Ritual, Divination, and History in a Pictorial Aztec Manuscript*, facsimile edition (Austin: 1995). I have also consulted Hamy E.T. (ed.), *Codex Telleriano-Remensis; manuscrit mexicain du cabinet de Ch. M. Le Tellier, archevêque de Reims, à la Bibliothèque nationale (ms. mexicain no. 385)*, facsimile edition (Paris: 1899).

<sup>2</sup> The continuities between folia, for the most part, correspond to the simultaneity of verso and recto folia in our experience of book structures. Whereas the flow from recto to verso entails discontinuity, the juxtaposition verso/recto may lend itself to creating a continuous text. This sequence – verso/recto – is particularly manifest in the sections of Telleriano-Remensis dedicated to the *tonalamatl* (Book of the Days) and the *veintena*, feasts of the twenty months of the agricultural year-count. As for the *xiuhamatl* (Book of the Years), often referred to as the annals, the strip of year-sequences offers an apparently homogeneous series of dates under which events are inscribed. There are two main sections in the *xiuhamatl* corresponding to antiquity. The first series corresponds to the migration story of the Mexica (Aztecs) in which dates placed at the bottom of the page have a more or less consistent correspondence with place names but the events are scattered all over the folia and the movement denoted by feet patterns suggest the meandering Chichimecs moving between recto to verso. The dates are not colored with the characteristic use of *xihuitl*, the color turquoise that also means year. Although the strip of dates suggests a *xiuhamatl*, the lack of consistency and combination of different pictographic forms suggests that the *tlacuilo* drew his information from a variety of sources formatted in diverse prototypes ranging from events organized according a year list to events organized in terms of a cartographic space. The second series locate the time strip on the top section of the page and use *xihuitl* to color the dates. The sequence of the events from the ancient times flow seamlessly into the colonial period. Formally the rupture between the migration story of the Mexica is much more abrupt than the transition to the colonial period. In defining the formal characteristics of pictographic writing before and after the Spanish invasion we must attend to the invention of new pictorial vocabularies for inscribing events, institutions and people in consonance to the Mesoamerican tradition. Although I have

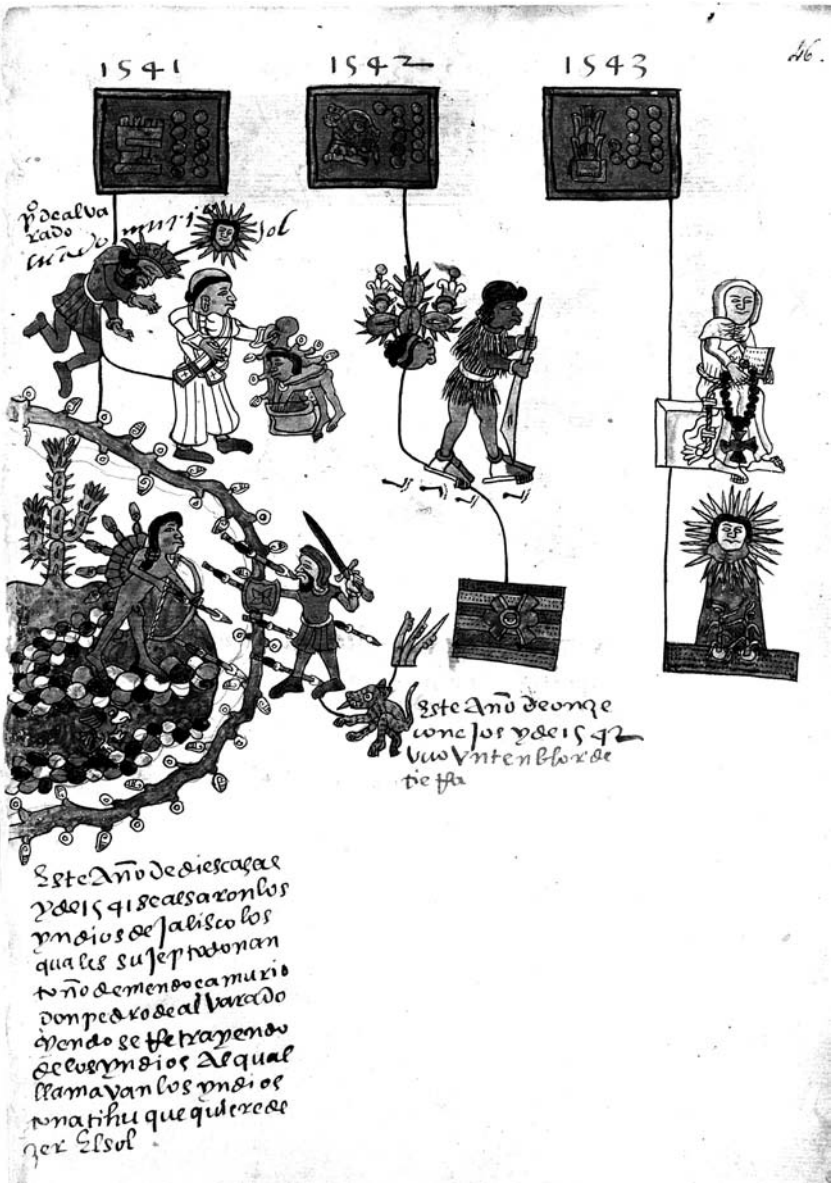


Fig. 1. Codex Telleriano-Remensis, fol. 46r. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

kind of book, an invention that requires to be evaluated in terms of experimentation with new materials, rather than criteria of purity and authenticity. Codex Telleriano-Remensis may thus be understood as a colonial Mesoamerican book even though it was produced at the request of supervising missionaries. Thus, Telleriano-Remensis is the product of two subjectivities: one guides and glosses the paintings, the other responds to the request for an *objective* record of Mesoamerican life. Although this essay attaches to the historiography written on/in the margins of Telleriano-Remensis, it focuses especially on the pictorial component, asking how the imagery challenges us to understand the *tlacuilo*'s painting as a form of thinking that might engage and perhaps illuminate contemporary philosophical disquisitions on propositional picturing, representation, and the ontological status perspective.

Telleriano-Remensis is one of many collaborative texts produced by the Nahua and Spanish missionaries. The objective of these texts was to produce a visual record of Mesoamerican culture. The visualization of culture was also concerned with creating a linguistic register of voices that could enable the writing of dictionaries, grammars, catechisms, confession manuals, and sermons in Nahuatl. What is outstanding about these early colonial projects is that the Nahua were responsible for painting the books as well as transcribing voices into alphabetical writing. In these efforts we find the missionary eyes and native Mesoamerican conjoined. In studying these native hybrid texts one can trace the return of the gaze of the observed (the native painter/writer) in that the observer (missionaries) becomes one more item in the colonial horizon of subjects to paint.

The attempt to reproduce the pictorial writing system suggests that the *tlacuilo* is immersed in a system of representation that circumscribes the production of replicas of the ancient books for the Spanish authorities. It is not the production of a traditional pictorial text but a copy, a version that provides information and stands for the original religious and historical books. In responding to the request to produce a copy, the *tlacuilo* demonstrates his ability to participate in the Spanish

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reservations for a generalized use of the words book or *libro* to speak of the painted artifacts on bark, known as *amatl*, we should consider that the history of these European words hardly limit themselves to the bound artifacts we know by these terms today, and even less to the Scriptures. Indeed, the etymology of *libro* takes us to *liber* in Latin that originally meant bark, and book dates back to the German *buch*, and perhaps to bark of beech. In a generalized translation *buch*, *libro* and *amatl* would be equivalents.

system of representation that sought to make the native world visible. Even when the *tlacuilo* participates in the project of representing native culture we need to avoid a language that reads the *tlacuilo*'s pictures within categories that might be pertinent to the Renaissance aesthetic and epistemological project of visual appropriation of the world, but that would inevitably distort the specifics of Mesoamerican iconic script. For instance, we will see that the *tlacuilo*'s use of perspective could not be farther from Albrecht Dürer's definition of perspective as 'seeing through'. This is not because the *tlacuilo* was ignorant of the techniques of linear perspective and chiaroscuro, but rather because her use of perspective must be understood from within her *own* system of painting and writing, that incorporates perspective as one more signifier in a pictorial vocabulary devised for depicting the novelties of the colonial order.

The events on folio 46r are organized around three dates extending from 1541 to 1543, which would correspond to years Ten House, Eleven Rabbit, and Twelve Reed in the Mesoamerican calendar. The Judeo-Christian dates on top of the glyphs offer a translation into a homogeneous temporality that undermines the significance of Mesoamerican dates within the *Tonalamatl* (the 260 day count of the days), its connection to the 360-day count of the agricultural year, and the 52-year cycles that synchronize the two counts. One reading of this page would emphasize the similarities with the European genre of the *annales* (annals), which would lead us to think of the depicted events as discrete fragments of events in a given year.<sup>3</sup> If these fragments are seen as meaningful according to the European calendrical system of *anno domini*, these possible meanings would yet be extraneous to the Mesoamerican count. The significance of Ten House remains invisible when one ignores the Mesoamerican spatio-temporal *habitus* that cannot be reduced to its 'transparent' equivalence to 1542. If the equation of 12 House and 1542 is significant with respect to the Spanish colonial

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion and generic classification of Mesoamerican pictographic history in terms of annals, *res gestae*, and cartographic histories, see Boone E.H., *Stories in Black and Red: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs* (Austin: 2000). These historical forms, according to Boone, emphasize in different degrees on time, space, and genealogy. If Boone's typology offers an understanding of the different formats, there is a danger of erasing the specificity of the Mesoamerican genre. In spite of a long-standing tradition in ethnohistory that speaks of annals as if this category offered a transparent description I will insist on using *xiuhamatl* (book of the years) or *xiuhpohualli* (count of the years). For a critique of Boone's use of European concepts, see Navarrete F., "The Path from Aztlan to Mexico: On Visual Narration in Mesoamerican Codices", *Res* 37 (2000) 31–48.

order, the reconfiguration of Mesoamerican counts imposes a grid (*anno domini*) that circumscribes the ancient into the Judeo-Christian calendar. This is an early instance of the use of the Judeo-Christian calendar for the dating of events in all cultures whether on the basis of written documentation or archaeological evidence. The 'West' may now write the history of all peoples. And yet, there is a moment of uncertainty in the gloss, in that it proceeds by addition in identifying the two dating systems. Take for instance: "Este año de diez casas y de 1541" [This year of ten house and of 1541]. The y/and entails the possibility of reflecting on the significance of the dates according to the two chronologies.

A first moment in the reading of folio 46r would entail the recognition of the depicted objects – the annotator identifies some of the events, while he seems to have taken others as self-evident. The most enigmatic among them is the walking figure wearing a European hat, a straw suit, sandals, and carrying a walking stick next to the glyph of Tenochtitlan, the urban center where the Mexica also known as Aztecs dwelled. Is he returning to or departing from Tenochtitlan? Where from? Whereto? Perhaps he is going to or returning from the northern frontier, as part of the central Mexican Indian contingents who joined the forces of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza and suppressed the rebellion of the Cazcan (known as the Mixton War), as pictured and glossed on the left side of the page. The corpse floating on the top left is Pedro de Alvarado who, the gloss tells us, died while fleeing the Indians, 'yendose retrayendo de los indios'. On the top right we face, rather a Franciscan friar faces us dressed in the light gray habit characteristic of the order; he wears a cincture, carries a Seraphic rosary, and holds a book, perhaps a *doctrina* or a *confesionario*. On the other side of the page we observe a Dominican, whom we recognize by the emphasis the *tlacuilo* has placed on the formal attire worn while implanting baptism, the preferred sacrament of the Dominican order that demanded thorough catechization before conferring baptism, in opposition to the Franciscan order that baptized multitudes without indoctrination. After baptism, the Franciscans would enforce Christianity by obligating the new Christian subjects to learn the *doctrina* and take confession. The annotator apparently felt no need to gloss these images.

Elsewhere I have discussed the different between the missionary orders regarding evangelical practices, conceptualizations of the self, and conceptions of history. Here I emphasize the formal characteristics deployed in the depiction of these orders, rather than focusing on their doctrinal differences. The depiction of the two orders will enable us to conceptualize the ways in which the *tlacuilo* produced pictograms

for depicting the essence of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders that followed the same pictorial principles used for depicting deities in the sections dedicated to the *tonalamatl* and the *veintena*. The identifying attributes provide a symbolic definition of the Franciscan and the Dominican theologico-philosophical *habitus*, which is in fact encompassed by a Mesoamerican *habitus*. If the missionaries sought to colonize and dismantle the Mesoamerican *habitus*, they yet found themselves circumscribed by the same subjectivity they sought to transform.

As such, Telleriano-Remensis is the product of at least two subjectivities. On the one hand, we find the Dominican friars, led by Fray Pedro de los Ríos who supervised and requested the production of the codex; on the other hand, the *tlacuilo* who paints the books comprising at least three genre of Mesoamerican pictorial texts: the *tonalpohualli* (count of the days), the deities associated with the twenty monthly festivities of the agricultural count, and the *xiuhpohualli* (count of the years). The latter record of human events, which also includes natural catastrophes and astronomical phenomena, consists of events that occurred before and after the Spanish invasion. The *tlacuilo* manifests an uncanny ability to invent new pictorial vocabularies for recording Spanish political, religious, and everyday artifacts. Notable is the economical use of cultural elements for defining the two main missionary orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Whereas the reproduction of the *tonalamatl*, the festivities, and the record of human events before the conquest respond to the spatialization of native culture, the record of the events in the colonial period responds to the *tlacuilo*'s assignment to tell the story of how the Nahua were conquered.<sup>4</sup> Whereas one record seeks to document ancient culture, the other seeks to trace the colonization of the mind of the *tlacuilo*. What is being recorded is not only the establishment of the colonial order, but the incorporation and internalization of technologies of the self, among which one should include the use of perspective and the Latin alphabet. The eye of the modern inquisitor finds its match in the eye of the *tlacuilo* who depicts the colonial order from an *elsewhere* that remains inaccessible to the missionary. Indeed, the missionary

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the implications of requesting Indians to “tell the story of how they were conquered,” see Rabasa J., “Thinking Europe in Indian Categories; or, ‘Tell Me the Story of How I Conquered You’”, in Moraña M. – Dussel E. (eds.), *Coloniality at Large* (Durham: 2008) 43–76.

observer is observed by the observed *tlacuilo*. In the depiction of the Franciscan missionary we discover a symbolic use of perspective that enables the *tlacuilo* to call attention, by means of the frontal depiction, to the order's identification with the sacrament of penance, as well as to the inquisitorial powers assumed by Fray Juan de Zumárraga when he became the first bishop of Mexico in the early 1530's. The frontal perspective is used only on two occasions in the Telleriano-Remensis, for the image of Zumárraga and for the Franciscan on folio 46r, otherwise the *tlacuilo* remains faithful to the tradition of picturing subjects in profile, even when inventing new pictorial vocabularies.

### *Depiction and Representation*

In a series of entries in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein distinguishes between *depiction* and *representation*, in a way that illuminates the 'portraits' of the Franciscan and Dominican friars in folio 46r.<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, Wittgenstein never returned to this distinction and scholars have ignored it in commentaries of the *Tractatus*, with the notable exception of Roger M. White in his guide to this seminal work. I could very well be taking Wittgenstein's distinction in a direction he didn't anticipate or might not have approved, but my purpose here is not to interpret Wittgenstein, but rather to derive definitions of depiction and representation that lend themselves to a discussion of a broad range of forms including caricature, political power, stereotypes, ideal types in botanical illustrations in both *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*, ideal social types, particular historical events, and so on. White's discussion amounts to a couple of paragraphs and the essence of his observation resides in the following statement:

Wittgenstein is distinguishing two different concepts for which he uses the words 'Abbildung' and 'Darstellung', both of which are in normal German translatable as 'representation', but Wittgenstein's use are to be differentiated. I follow both the translations of the *Tractatus* in rendering 'Abbildung' as 'depiction' and 'Darstellung' as 'representation'. The distinction may be further clarified by noting that Wittgenstein always uses

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<sup>5</sup> Wittgenstein L., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, ed. and transl. by Pears D.F. – McGuinness B.F. (London: 1974 [1921]). Hereafter citations of the *Tractatus* follow the paragraph numbering in the original.

these terms with different objects: a picture depicts *reality*, but represents a *situation*.<sup>6</sup>

So much depends on the meaning of *situation* and *reality*. If all representations are also depictions, depictions are not necessarily representations of situations. Wittgenstein's language of representation and depiction, however, implies that such pictures always have a bearing on reality. Beyond the external world, pictures can be self referential, as in the example of the picture of a clean-shaved Socrates (White's example), which we may judge as a *misrepresentation* on the basis of the standard depictions of Socrates as a bearded man. The domain of reality might range for Wittgenstein from the most naturalistic trompe-l'oeil paintings to pictures in which 'unrealistic' size serves to depict power, either in the form that Francisco Tenamaztle (the Indian leader on the hill in folio 46r) embodies as he towers over Viceroy Mendoza or that the Franciscan missionary preachers assume in relation to their Indian auditors in Fray Diego Valadés's engravings illustrating the *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579).<sup>7</sup>

Wittgenstein's distinction between the terms depiction and representation enables us to understand the different kinds of pictures that the *tlacuilo* produced. Whereas depiction characterizes the Mesoamerican tradition of pictographic writing, representation corresponds to a particular moment in the history of the West, which in this case involves but neither absorbs nor dissolves the subjectivity of the *tlacuilo*'s picturing of Mesoamerican life-forms.

Let's begin the discussion of Wittgenstein with the following proposition: 'A picture can depict any reality whose form it has. A spatial picture can depict anything spatial, a coloured one anything coloured, etc.'<sup>8</sup> So much can be added to the etcetera. One could envision depiction as comprising formulas, musical scores, historical events and personages, social types, affects, deities, and so on. From there, Wittgenstein proposes: 'A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it'.<sup>9</sup> We may wonder, however, whether pictures using the perspective construction might be read as depicting the effect of three-dimensional space as a symbolic form by playfully using ana-

<sup>6</sup> White R.M., *Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: 2006) 49.

<sup>7</sup> Valadés Diego, *Retórica cristiana*, facsimile bilingual Latin-Spanish edition with an introduction by E.J. Palomera (Mexico City: 2003; orig. 1579).

<sup>8</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.171.

<sup>9</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.173.



morphosis to expose the rules of perspective. The fact that the *tlacuilo* uses European paper to be bound as book, and that she left space for the inscription of glosses, makes her copy of the Mesoamerican writing system a representation of an ethnographic situation. This does not, however, mean that her invention of a pictorial vocabulary abandons the principles of depiction that we identify with picturing reality without representation.

Clearly pertinent is Wittgenstein's dictum regarding the impossibility that a picture 'depict its pictorial form: it displays it' to the extent that what makes the gaze (*a fortiori* reality) visible cannot be made manifest – unless one were to engage and arbitrarily interrupt infinite regress. This proposition could be reformulated in terms of the impossibility of a *grammar of grammar*. We could add the notions of *background* (Frank Ankersmit) and *habitus* (Pierre Bourdieu) as limits that cannot be expressed without sliding into one more plane ruled by a new encompassing *habitus* or *background*.<sup>10</sup> It would then follow that a picture can show a *habitus* (*background* or *grammar*) without depicting the form that makes it intelligible. The pictorial form must ultimately be recognized in depiction, hence Wittgenstein's specification that 'What a picture must have in common with reality, in order to depict it – correctly or incorrectly – in the way it does, is its pictorial form'.<sup>11</sup> The notions of 'correct' and 'incorrect' would have nothing to do with the sort of distortions one finds in caricatures, where the depiction is correct when the subject is recognized, though ethically questionable (incorrect) when a stereotype is created.

The second set of propositions regarding *representation* opens: 'A picture represents its subject from a position outside it. (Its standpoint is its representational form.) That is why a picture represents its subject correctly or incorrectly'.<sup>12</sup> If in the case of depiction there is a correspondence between reality and form, Wittgenstein presumes an exteriority between representation and the object, which entails a distinction between a standpoint as representational form and the object of the representation. This exteriority sustains the correct and incorrect

<sup>10</sup> See Bourdieu P., "Postface to Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*", in Holsinger B. (ed.), Petit L. (trans.), *The Pre-Modern Condition: Medievalism and the Making of Theory* (Chicago: 2005) 221–242; Ankersmit F.R., *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.17.

<sup>12</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.173.

representation in terms of the adopted pictorial form. One could then speak of correct and incorrect uses of three-dimensional perspective as a particular adopted standpoint. But by the same token one could consider a picture in which the purpose is to play with multiple forms of perspective, as in a cubist painting. If a stereotype in depiction depends on the possible recognition of a reality, in representation the stereotype would become meaningful in a particular situation that wouldn't exhaust the elements that the depiction of a social type would render. Wittgenstein draws a parallel proposition to the impossibility that a depiction depicts its form: 'A picture cannot, however, place itself outside its representational form'.<sup>13</sup> Pictures that represent subjects would be bound to the adopted standpoint. This leads to the logical consequence that 'A picture represents a possible situation in logical space'.<sup>14</sup> In representation the standpoint – between subject and object – is bound to the situation or state of affairs, whereas depiction pictures reality without consideration of standpoint, situation, or state of affairs. As such, representation presupposes a separation of the subject and object and thus grounds and enables the appropriation of the world. Wittgenstein would seem to suggest that depiction does not partake of the epistemic chiasmus associated with René Descartes. Having said this we must note that the representation of a *situation* is at once a depiction and a representation, whereas the depiction of *reality* can exist without being a representation.

Would it be accurate to say that *reality* consists of a logical structure that remains undisturbed by the singularity of a *situation*? For example, would a clean-shaven Socrates alter the reality of Socrates as commonly depicted with a beard? Would the singularity of a *situation* turn into a logical form by the fact of repetition, as in the gramophone disc that records a singular musical event but is reproducible without change: 'A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting [*abbildenden*] that holds between language and the world' (4.014)?<sup>15</sup> Does this mean that the same object, say Phillip Glass's *Songs*

<sup>13</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.174.

<sup>14</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.202.

<sup>15</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 4.014. For a discussion of the gramophone example in the *Tractatus*, see Sterrett S.G., "Pictures of Sound: Wittgenstein on Gramophone records and the Logic of Depiction", *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 36 (2005) 351–362. Wittgenstein's example remains viable in the transition from analogue to digital formats.

and *Poems for a Cello Solo* as performed by Wendi Sutter, may record a *situation* but becomes a *reality* in its infinitely possible iteration? It might seem odd that Wittgenstein apparently places the emphasis on the gramophone record capturing the logic of the musical composition rather than its status as an event, but the essence of gramophone is the infinite iteration of the recorded performance, hence Wittgenstein stresses the picturing of its logic.<sup>16</sup> He further suggests the coexistence of depiction and representation in a picture when he states that ‘a picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence and non-existence of states of affairs’.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the picture of the cello concerto would depict reality by representing the possible iteration of the singular performance. We can make a similar argument regarding the depiction of an event (a reality) that in a painting would represent the specific situation of a possible state of affairs.

Earlier in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein proposes the following sequence of propositions: ‘*That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it’;<sup>18</sup> ‘It is laid against reality like a measure’;<sup>19</sup> ‘Only the end-points of the graduating line actually *touch* the object that is to be measured’.<sup>20</sup> The reaching out defines the *how*, the *that is how*, while *touch* implies a depiction that can affect the possible situations it comes to represent. I would place the emphasis on possible situations that are potentially *touched* by a depiction of reality, which would differ from the case of representation that is always bound to a situation. Indeed there is a play between depiction and representation, in that the former can teach us how to see the world, and then bring the touching of the real into the specific details of the representation of a situation. The touching would also involve affect, as in the caricature that accentuates or distorts traits, thereby inducing a subject to view the world according to these characteristics, but also as in the affect that results when a subject finds itself mirrored in a depiction.

In the context of Telleriano-Remensis the request that the *tlacuilo* objectify his culture by reproducing the pictographic system of writing,

<sup>16</sup> Sterret observes that for Wittgenstein, ‘This would mean that the peculiarities of an individual performance, unless they are captured in both the musical score and the gramophone lines, are not considered part of the logical structure of the symphony performance’ (Sterrett, “Pictures of Sound” 360).

<sup>17</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.201.

<sup>18</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.151.

<sup>19</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.1512.

<sup>20</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 2.15121.

seeks to *touch* Mesoamerican life by confining meaning to an uprooted existence. It conveys a form of controlling the reality by copying it. In this regard, the *tlacuilo* is producing a *representation* that would enable the missionaries to *see* the world. It partakes of the simple structure of such judgments as: ‘this *is* the Mesoamerican calendar, feasts, and history’. In the context of the colonial world, the *tlacuilo*’s representation is caught in a parody that extends the mimetic capture of the power of the deities by including the neutralization of the power of the friars. Bearing this in mind. Let us now examine the collection and fabrication of pictographs, and the inscription of glosses in Telleriano-Remensis.

*Codex Telleriano-Remensis as an Album*

We may further clarify the difference between *depiction* and *representation* by considering cases in the history of objectivity when it behooves us to distinguish in between an album containing drawings of ideal plant and animal types, and photographs and other mechanical representations recording objects within their specific settings, along with macula and all kinds of other particularities. In *Objectivity* Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison focus their history of objectivity on developments in the art and science of creating images of objects, from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. Daston and Galison conclude with the transition from representation to presentation that they identify with nanotechnology and nanomanipulation: ‘In this corner of science, the representation of the real – the use of images to finally get nature straight – may be coming to an end’.<sup>21</sup> *Presentation* no longer aspires to copy what exists, but rather (at least in some formulations) to produce images that no one has ever seen, and moreover to produce haptic images as *tools* that enable us to manipulate reality. In their concluding chapter they call attention to the long tension between representation (most explanatory) and intervention (most efficacious), and the intimate connection between epistemology and fear. Given their insistence on dating the ‘mental universe in which we moderns are now so at home had its Big Bang a scant two hundred years ago’, it is perhaps misplaced to insist that this epistemic mutation could be

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<sup>21</sup> Daston L. – Galison P., *Objectivity* (New York: 2007) 392.

dated earlier than the eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup> However, historical narratives of *first time* remain suspect, and it is worth noting that in the end Daston and Galison aspire to tell a story that bolsters the ideals of objectivity even while outlining the horizon of *presentation* in the demise of the 're-' that entails repetition. So too in their statement that 'objectivity fears subjectivity, the core self', we may legitimately observe that this fear is never completely resolved, and we may wish to apply Bruno Latour's conception of *factishes* (beyond fetish and fact as discreet readily accessible opposites) that reminds us that facts and fetishes *are* and *are not* fabrications:

'Fetish' and 'fact' can be traced to the same root. The *fact* is that which is fabricated and not fabricated [...] But the *fetish* too is that which is fabricated and not fabricated. There is nothing secret about this joint etymology. Everyone says it constantly, explicitly, obsessively: the scientists in their laboratory practice, the adepts of fetish cults in their rites. But we use these words *after* the hammer has broken them in two: The fetish has become nothing but empty stone onto which meaning is mistakenly projected; the fact has become absolute certainty which can be used as a hammer to break away all the delusions of belief.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the term 'fetish' does not figure in the language of the missionaries, but their efforts to expose idolatry and superstition would play a role similar to the breaking of the fetish to shards. The depiction of the gods in Telleriano-Remensis suggests a mode of neutralization that reduces them to album pictures recording their symbolic appurtenances, and forces the *tlacuilo* to paint their semblance in a 'purely' secular context. Nothing occurs when 'I tear the temples down', or when 'I paint them' for purposes of extirpation. The gods would seem to flee from the world. But we twenty-first century scholars are also immersed in the logic of factuality ruled by objectivity when we condemn the missionaries and refuse to conceive of Christian native subjects, projecting our expectations of a generalized resistance without realizing that the resistant subject of the postcolonial intellectual is the inverted image of the hard-hearted subject of the missionary. In Daston and Galison's invocation of 'we moderns' one might hear an allusion to Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Moderns*, but in the tension between these two stories of the *self* of science, we will find ourselves

<sup>22</sup> Daston – Galison, *Objectivity* 375.

<sup>23</sup> Latour B., *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: 1999) 272.

inscribed. Beyond the question of whether it is acceptable to date back the production of *albums* to the early modern era, we find ourselves caught in these *histories of objectivity*. For Daston and Galison, it is not just any self that defines ‘we moderns’, but one caught ‘in a particular mental universe in which all that exists is divided into the opposed and symmetrical provinces of the objective and the subjective’; and yet there is no reason to find consolation in this apparent necessity nor in limiting ourselves to the narrative they have chosen to tell.<sup>24</sup>

Following Wittgenstein’s definitions of depiction and representation, I would argue that the project of producing and collecting *objects* by depicting ideal types and representing items in certain situations can be traced back to the encyclopedic texts missionaries and lay historians produced in the sixteenth century. Whereas *ideal types* depict the ideal reality of the given item, *items in situation* represent particulars in a state of affairs. The picturing of an ideal type has little or no concern with setting and situation, but instead aims to picture the general form. It is in this respect that a depiction of an ideal type would touch upon reality by leading the eye to details that might otherwise remain invisible.

I don’t want to reduce Wittgenstein to Cartesianism, but there is an echo of Descartes in his discussion of solipsism first motivated by the proposition, ‘I am the world’,<sup>25</sup> which gains further clarity in the statement, ‘The subject does not belong to the world; rather, it is a limit of the world’, finds full expression in the observation, ‘Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it’.<sup>26</sup> This line of thought concludes with the assertion, ‘The philosophical self is not the human being [...] but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not part of it’.<sup>27</sup> This ‘philosophical self’ comes very

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<sup>24</sup> In addition to Latour as offering an alternative story of the desire to become absolutely modern (i.e., objective and non-ideological) we may note Foucault M., *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: 1966), translated into English as the *Order of Things* (New York: 1973); Heidegger M., “The Age of the World Picture”, in idem, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt (New York: 1977); Lacan J., “La science et la vérité”, in idem, *Écrits II* (Paris: 1971) 219–244. Foucault, Heidegger, and Lacan in their distinct ways trace the chiasmus between the subject and the object to Descartes.

<sup>25</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 5.63.

<sup>26</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 5.64.

<sup>27</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 5.641.

close to the always absent subject of such ontological judgments as ‘the sky is blue’, which is grounded in a third person with no bearing to the subject of the enunciation. Further developing the insights of the Port-Royal logicians, Louis Marin arrives at a series of insights that resonate with Wittgenstein’s proposition regarding the non-existence of the subject ‘that thinks or entertains ideas’:

Judgments such as ‘the sky is blue’ or ‘the earth is round’ can thus be rewritten as follows: ‘it is, blue the sky’ or ‘it is, round the earth’. In such utterances ‘it,’ the subject of the verb ‘to be’, functions as purely neutral marker of the indescribable emergence of a given thing’s being. As a result, ‘it’ excludes all reference to a subject of representation and discourse.<sup>28</sup>

The form ‘it is, the blue sky’ entails a chiasmus between mode and substance that calls forth a system of language that circumscribes the utterance within the field of representation. In Wittgenstein’s terms, the utterance ‘the sky is blue’ *stands for* the exterior world. In this respect judgments and propositional pictures participate in the judicial regimes through which science defines the legitimacy of representation (it follows the rules) and the right to appropriate the represented object (it belongs to the subject – collective or individual – of the judicial ontological statement). The process of defining the object’s properness (lawful and property) entails the subject’s ownership. The comparative act that establishes the connection between ‘sky’ and ‘blue’ subsumes one entity into another that is constituted as a subject passing judgment on the world.

Of what use are Marin’s and Wittgenstein’s terms for understanding early modern pictures of the world, and, even more specifically, for understanding Mesoamerican pictographs? The Cartesian split between the subject and specifying predicates regarding the centrality of verbs, more particularly of the verb ‘to be’ in the Port Royal grammars, may very well amount to a formalization of epistemic transformations already applied to describing and classifying what seemed unprecedented about American nature and culture in the sixteenth century. Beyond the question of the ontological status of perspective, Louis Marin has reminded us of the connection between the subject of spatial perspective and the subject of linguistic utterances in the

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<sup>28</sup> Marin L., “Questions, Hypothesis, Discourse”, in idem, *To Destroy Painting*, trans. M. Hjort (Chicago: 1995) 22.

grammars of Port Royal. In spatial perspective we find in the picture offering a representational window onto the world a split between the subject and object, which is mediated by the picture; such pictures bear the same formal structure as utterances in which verbs function as nominative judgments about the world that constitute the being of things – e.g., ‘the sky is blue’ entails a subject passing judgment on an object, for which the mediation and status of truth resides in the utterance-judgment that functions as a representation. The commonality between pictures and verbal judgments would entail what Jacques Lacan defines as the ‘subject of science’.<sup>29</sup> This regime of science vis-à-vis magic, myth, the religion of the other (for sixteenth-century missionaries Christianity is identified with science in opposition to superstition and idolatry) posits a (potentially) colonized subject that would now police his or her connection to the gods, as well as to spiritual agents, animal and humans, that are defined as deceptions. The science that defines myth, idolatry, and superstition constitutes a position for countering the influence of Satan. The subject of science underlies and enables the application of perspective and the imposition of judgments, defining the technological discourse of the self that was implemented in written discourses as well as in the confessional. In depicting the Franciscan in a frontal view as seeing us, the *tlacuilo* indeed captures the friars’ powers of observation.

In reading Codex Telleriano-Remensis, we have to attend to the differences between the process of appropriation in the depiction of ancient and colonial Mesoamerican *things* and the glosses that define the ‘it is’ of the *things*, e.g., ‘este tezcacatlipoca es el que se aparecio a las gentes en el cerro del espejo’ [this tezcacatlipoca is the one that appeared to the people on the hill of the mirror].<sup>30</sup> Do we witness incompatible forms of appropriation and incommensurable modes of signification not only between the systems of painting and writing, but

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<sup>29</sup> On the irreducibility of the subject of knowledge (*savoir*) to the subject of science, Lacan has written the following on magic: ‘Le savoir s’y caractérise non pas seulement de rester voilé pour le sujet de la science, mais de dissimuler comme tel, tant dans la tradition opératoire que dans son acte. C’est une condition de la magie’ (Lacan, “Science et verité” 236–237). On perspective, the subject of science, and the analogies between the pronominal shifters I/you/it in utterances and the deictic shifters here/there/over there, see Damish H., *L’Origine de la perspective* (Paris: 1987); Grootenboer H., *The Rhetoric of Perspective: Realism and Illusionism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Still-life Painting* (Chicago: 2005); Escoubas E., *L’Espace pictural* (Paris: 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, fol. 3v.



also between the uses of writing and painting in different sections of Telleriano-Remensis? In addition to glosses that identify the pictures, we find a disagreement between the different annotators, most visible in the erasures of Pedro de los Ríos who scratches words, sentences and whole passages, but also destroys the aesthetic and epistemological integrity of the folia with careless calligraphy that we cannot just attribute to bad handwriting, but must instead see as invasive and perhaps also indicative of an attitude of condescension toward the class of indigenous and mestizo scribes who cultivated their handwriting.<sup>31</sup> The Spanish nobility notoriously prided themselves on their inability to write clearly, thus distinguishing themselves from scribes and *letrados*. We can assume that mestizos or Indians trained by the Dominicans wrote the carefully drafted inscriptions that sometimes approximate print. However, the intellectual content of the glosses does not necessarily reflect their ideas or native tongue.

The scratches, corrections, and additions may very well be indicative of tensions within the Dominican order: the neutral descriptions would imply notationally an affinity with Bartolomé de Las Casas's views on the compatibility of Mesoamerican life-forms with Christianity, which was opposed by other members of the order who advocated the need for the complete extirpation of the native *habitus*. I would argue that the picture of the Dominican and the Franciscan friars on folio 46r is indicative of the *tlacuilo*'s grasp of the irreconcilable philosophical differences between the two orders; responsive to the sensibility of a Dominican faction, led to interrupt production three folia later and to correct retrospectively the content of the glosses. For instance, the identification of the god Xolotl with twins and everything born in pairs, 'dizen que era el señor de los melliços y todas las cosas que nacian juntas' [they say that he was the lord of twins and things born in pairs], carries de addenda by Ríos, 'que nosotros llamamos mellizos o cuando la naturaleza obra alguna cosa monstruosa, fuera de lo acostumbrado' [that we call twins or when nature produces something monstrous, out of the common]. Ríos adds that those born on the

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<sup>31</sup> See Bouza F., *Corre manuscrito: una historia cultural del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: 2001). Mundy B., *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: 1996), has made an analogous observation with respect to the distribution of tasks in responses to the questionnaires of the Relaciones Geográficas. She argues that Spanish officials assigned the drafting of the *pinturas* to Indians because they felt painting was below their status.

days ruled by Xolotl, 'serian mal fin y bellaco' [would end bad and be evildoers].<sup>32</sup> Ríos's second round of annotations interpolates information to further define the significance of the dates beyond the initial description. These hands correcting each other suggests not only an internal disagreement among the Dominican friars supervising the production of Telleriano-Remensis, but also semantic and semiotic slippages in the paintings whose significations were not readily grasped by the annotators.

The impulse to appropriate Mesoamerican culture by pictorially representing it carries a burden: the representation and the subject of the representation exceed the meaning the glosses would like to establish as a way of reducing *things* to a judicial regime. Does the depiction of European institutions and social types sap the power of the colonial order? The *tlacuilo*'s forced participation in the subject of science, that is, his ability to paint the semblance of the gods for the purpose of objectifying his own culture, results in the unexpected effect that the *tlacuilo* objectifies the colonial order and thereby, even if only slightly, eludes its power of representation by codifying the system that was intended to further the erasure of the Mesoamerican *habitus*. There is a striking similarity in the ways the *tlacuilo* writes the pictographs of the deities and the depictions of the Dominican and Franciscan orders. The latter are made up of traits that define their spiritual power in a manner not unlike the deities whose appurtenances codify their spheres of influence.

The Codex Telleriano-Remensis, along with a wide range of similar collections of information on pre-Columbian cultures, must be understood as early instances, in the history of objectivity, of albums that collect images of the world. These album-codices include pictures of deities, plants, animals and everyday objects, but also verbal prototypes of songs, incantations, prayers, historical narratives, and creation stories pertaining to Mesoamerican cultures.

If coordinated by a European missionary or lay official, native informants (as in the case of Telleriano-Remensis) often produced the pictures and verbal records. As such, the paintings and written glosses

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<sup>32</sup> Quiñones Keber, *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*, fol. 13v.

offer a glimpse not only of the depicted subject matter, but also manifest the *habitus* of those who requested the materials as well as of those who produced the actual albums and chronicles. In the process the *tlacuilo* included in the album pictures of missionary and lay officials, various European objects, animals, attitudes, and standpoints that those who requested them didn't seem to have anticipated. As such the observer found himself observed. One cannot but see in the depiction of a frontal Franciscan a return of the *tlacuilo*'s gaze that exposes the gaze of the missionary.

The depiction of the Franciscan and the Dominican constitutes them as items in an album that would finally be more meaningful for the Nahua than for the missionaries that supervised its production. Indeed, for the latter the depictions might have seemed offensive given the caricaturesque simplicity that captured the essence of the orders. In these portraits of the friars the *tlacuilo* neutralizes the power these orders exercise, each in its own style of evangelization, on the Nahua subjects. This is a form of exerting power by means of mimetic mirroring in which the observer finds himself observed, indeed captured by the objectification of the system of belief and evangelical practice (as well as the intense disputes regarding the administration of baptism and their implied relativism manifest in the differences between their theologico-philosophical traditions) that the friars would have preferred to remain invisible to the Nahua. And then again, the *tlacuilo* power of depiction could very well reside in a field of vision located *elsewhere* than the points of view of the missionaries.

The Dominican friar wearing a highly stylized white costume, which looks more like baggy pantaloons fastened below the calf than the Dominican habit, lends the image a joyful playfulness that connects to the joy of the nude Nahua, wearing just a *tilma*, receiving the waters of baptism [Fig. 1]. One cannot but think of the Nahua as appearing to jump into the baptismal font just as the friar seems ready to burst into a dance. There would be motives for celebrations, since baptism was the final step in a long process of indoctrination that involved the Nahua's recognizing fully the consequences and significance of accepting baptism. The ceremonial dress, which along with the white pantaloons includes a liturgical stole, would have been conspicuous to the friar supervising the production of Telleriano-Remensis. One may assume that it rubbed him the wrong way, considering that the *tlacuilo* was removed from his task a few pages later, where coarse scribbling by Pedro de los Rios replaced the pictures

of the *tlacuilo*. The semblance suggests the economy of a caricature that accentuates spiritual traits of the depicted subject. The pantaloons-like attire reproduces the finery of the Dominican white tunic, which would lead Nahuatl to observe the exquisite attire of the order in everyday catechizing, imparting mass, baptizing, or just walking on the streets of towns.

The semblance of the Dominican contrasts starkly with the Franciscan sitting on the left side of folio 46r under 12 Reed and above a monolith with a European image of the sun, a motif also used to name Pedro de Alvarado (known as *Tonatiuh*, sun in Nahuatl), who appears as a corpse suspended behind the Dominican friar [Fig. 1]. At the base of the monolith we find two maize plants, perhaps wilted by excessive heat and hence an allusion to the strength of the sun—scholars may further document that the date 12 Reed was a year of draught in central Mexican calendar I am inclined, however, to associate the two maize plants with the planting of the faith symbolized by the sun atop the monolith. It would make sense to associate the stalks with the imparting of the catechism, given that the Franciscan is holding a *doctrina* or *confesionario*, both instruments for evangelization. The habit of the Franciscan consists of the traditional full-length robe made of rough wool, a huge Seraphic rosary, and the triple-knotted cincture emblematic of the vows to poverty, humility, and contemplation. The Franciscan and the Dominican surface as ideal types defined by their habits, religious paraphernalia, and preferred sacraments (penitence vis-à-vis baptism), attributes that distil the identities of the two orders. But there is one more element that distinguishes the Franciscan and merits a detailed discussion, namely, the use of perspective.

### *Depicting Perspective*

In *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Erwin Panofsky drew an exhaustive inventory of the symbolic forms perspective has assumed in the West at different historical moments ranging from Greco-Roman Antiquity to the Quattrocento and Cinquecento. He derives from Albrecht Dürer a definition of perspective that places the emphasis on seeing through: ‘Item Perspectiva ist ein lateinisches Wort, bedeutet eine Durchsehung (*Perspectiva* is a Latin word which means “seeing through”):’.<sup>33</sup> Panof-

<sup>33</sup> Panofsky E., *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. C.S. Wood (New York: 1991 [1927]) 27; parenthetical English translation in original.

sky goes on to emphasize his understanding of Perspective as a window: 'we are meant to believe we are looking through this window.... The material surface upon which the figures or objects are drawn or painted or carved is thus negated, and instead reinterpreted as a mere "picture plane"'.<sup>34</sup> Although Panofsky draws examples of projections representative of "an immediate sensory impression or...a more or less 'correct' geometrical construction," he argues that theories of perspective as invented in the Quattrocento betray an error: 'perspectival construction ignores the crucial circumstance that this retinal image – entirely apart from its subsequent psychological "interpretation", and even apart from the fact that the eyes move – is a projection not on a flat but on a concave surface'.<sup>35</sup> Hubert Damisch has argued that Panofsky confuses the theory of optics and the structure of the retinal concavity with the experience of vision: '[Panofsky] confused the effective conditions of vision with the optical process that led to the formation of an image on the internal surface, concave, of the retine; it is also evident that his confusion led him to, begin with to just recognize in the costruzione legittima a relative validity'.<sup>36</sup> Panofsky and Damisch exemplify opposites in debates over the nature of perspective: perspective as a code that betrays a pictorial convention vs. perspective as a paradigm for apprehending reality. The debate would include Nelson Goodman and E.H. Gombrich, as illustrious representatives of the opposing views. Samuel Y. Edgerton sums up the terms of the debate when he writes:

while it is true that geometric perspective did eventually become a culturally prejudiced encoding system, I stand with Gombrich in believing that this Euclidian construct is *not* inherently culture-bound. Western Renaissance-style pictures still reproduce, as no other art form can, the true surface characteristics of the phenomenal world as they are optically transmitted point by point into the human eye by the reflected ambient light.<sup>37</sup>

Whether the system of perspective provides a window for observing the world or betrays a code that demands habituation to be understood, the representations pass judgments on the world. In the colonial catechistic culture, the subject of perspective and enunciation must

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<sup>34</sup> Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* 27.

<sup>35</sup> Id., 31.

<sup>36</sup> Damisch, *L'Origine* 23.

<sup>37</sup> Edgerton Jr. S.Y., *The Heritage of Giotto's Geometry: Art and Science on the Eve of the Scientific Revolution* (Ithaca: 1991) 10.

respond to regulative doctrinal statements (i.e., God is three and one, or your gods are false deities) and to visual pictures that offer windows onto the natural world and leave no room for depictions of Mesoamerican deities. Such pictures depict a world cleansed of aberrations, even when the same system of representation portrays demons, scenes of hell, and prefigurations of doomsday. If one were to place an emphasis on the conventional nature of perspective, the depiction of a Franciscan in a frontal position sitting on a cube could be seen to manifest the *tlacuilo*'s understanding of techniques of perspective. Perspective would seem to operate as *habitation* (to borrow Nelson Goodman's term) but this ability to portray objects perspectively would be a rather facile acquisition, if one simply took the *tlacuilo*'s ability to reproduce perspective as a symbolic marker of confessional and inquisitorial vigilance even if her use of perspective seems faulty. It is, perhaps, not a coincidence that the *tlacuilo* depicted the friar sitting on a cube, the example par excellence in phenomenology of the impossibility of viewing the totality of objects. Does the cube as an instantiation of the concealment of the world provide a symbol for the inaccessibility of the subject under confession? Does it constitute a reminder of the inaccessible *elsewhere* from which the *tlacuilo* observes the friars? For the purpose of examining the depiction of perspective in folio 46r we must assume that the *tlacuilo* was familiar with geometrical perspective and the *camera obscura* even when his use of perspective might be faulty. In this regard it is pertinent to mention Gombrich's observation that if it took centuries to discover the secrets of linear perspective and chiaroscuro, once acquired these techniques can be transmitted in the span of a few days.<sup>38</sup>

Following Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Marin has written 'that the third dimension is invisible, for it is nothing but our vision. It cannot be seen because it does not unfold under our gaze, for the simple reason that it is our gaze'. Marin goes on to cite Merleau-Ponty to the effect that 'What makes depth invisible for me is precisely what makes it visible for the spectator as breadth: the juxtaposition of simultaneous points in one direction which is that of my gaze'. As we read Telleriano-

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<sup>38</sup> See Gombrich E., *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: 1968) 359–360. Also see Edgerton *Heritage of Giotto's Geometry* 6: 'I have found that they [American college students] can listen to the basic directions and then draw a picture in accurate perspective of a simple rectilinear room with door and windows, furniture and human occupants to scale, all within one hour'.

Remensis and other Mesoamerican codices, we may construe the use of profile as a choice for conveying depth as breadth – not as pictorial limitation – as a spatial turn in which the subject has to leave its point of view and ‘think itself elsewhere, outside its plane of vision’.<sup>39</sup> The *tlacuilo*’s juxtaposition of the Dominican in profile, yet depicting the movement of the left arm administering the baptismal waters, and the Franciscan in a frontal view, suggesting both volume and shallow depth, plays with the sense of *elsewheres* that enable subjects to dwell in (as well as shift between)<sup>40</sup> different points of view and planes of vision. Is the Dominican’s use of the left arm to impart baptism an indication of calquing as in Caravaggio’s *Bacchus*? The debate on the ontological status of perspective has little or no bearing on the *tlacuilo* when he is interpreted not as producing a window ‘to see through’ (Dürer by Panofsky) but rather as depicting perspective as one of the appurtenances that saturate the picture of the Franciscan on fol. 46r with inquisitorial and confessional signification.

Given that the projection of objects and figures onto a picture plane conforms with the creation of stelae before the Spanish invasion we may assume that the effect of perspectival depth would have been recognized, even though frontal facial views were not a practice in pictography or on vases in which the conventions always called for profile drawing against a flat background as the primary indicator of breadth and amplitude. Pictures in profile can be read as conveyors of depth as breadth in a system of representation that suggests the layering of objects without concealing them (one consequence of perspectival recession). Within the convention of portraying faces in profile, the creation of volume and breadth is something one can appreciate in both Maya and Nahua pictures. This would suggest that the notion of the perspectival window of the world would have been readily understood without requiring that this representational system be learned as a code. I say for the most part, because we, twenty-first century observers of photography and painting, may find ourselves unable to recognize objects. I find unconvincing the argument that the sixteenth-century Nahua would have been incapable of experiencing deception

<sup>39</sup> Marin L., “Representation and Simulacrum”, in idem, *On Representation*, trans. C. Porter (Stanford: 2001) 313.

<sup>40</sup> Hence the analogies we may draw between linguistic shifters and space locations. For relevant literature, see note 29.

in trompe-l'oeil.<sup>41</sup> After all, Mesoamerica was filled with tricksters and artist who performatively fashioned simulacra. Rather than mystifying the knowledge of perspective, we should assume that if perspective was not readily recognizable, its conventions and techniques were quickly learned by the Nahua. The degree of mastery is perhaps nowhere more manifest than in the *tlacuilo*'s ability to depict perspective as a representational paradigm rather than using it to 'see through' as Dürer defined *perspectiva*. Moreover, the apparent limitations we may discern in using flat surfaces rather than spatial depth was equally characteristic of certain Spanish prints and paintings.<sup>42</sup> At the risk of sounding Eurocentric (can this be avoided when using a European language and discourse?) I would cite Edgerton's observation on the global impact of linear perspective and chiaroscuro: 'Thus Western Renaissance art has influenced so many non-Western cultures not because it is imperially imposed but because it works more convincingly – more like natural perception – than traditional, even locally accepted magic representations'.<sup>43</sup> God forbid that sixteenth-century Nahua should have been fascinated with the art of linear perspective or, for that matter, with phonetic writing. This fascination would of course not necessarily mean that they were unaware of the theological implications linking linear perspective to the missionaries evangelical project by way of the notion that 'Pictures rendered in perspective permitted human beings to see the world just as God conceived of his creation'.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> On the use of trompe-l'oeil in murals in Colonial buildings in Mexico, see Gruzinski S., *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492–2019)*, MacLean H. (trans.) (Durham: 2001) 81: 'Trompe-l'oeil was commonly used, and even deliberately promoted in Mexico, for it enabled one to obtain the equivalent of decorative sculpture at little cost. But ultimately its usefulness was restrained, or annulled: not only was the Indian not accustomed to "reading" these projections, but also, because he had no knowledge of Europe, he could hardly conceive of the shapes, motifs, architectonic effects – the caisson ceiling, for example – to which the procedure alluded sought to suggest. Far from proposing substitutes to the eye, the trompe-l'oeil risked being reduced, in the native gaze, to an additional decorative variation'. Given Gruzinski's conception of linear perspective as a 'code' that needed to be learned, it is, perhaps, consequential that for him trompe-l'oeil implied an exercise in 'reading'. The strangeness of objects under trompe-l'oeil, however, does not seem to imply the inability to fall for its illusionist effect.

<sup>42</sup> For samples of types of woodcuts and paintings the *tlacuilo* could have experienced, see Lyell J.P.R., *Early Book Illustration in Spain* (New York: 1976); Toussaint M., *Pintura Colonial en Mexico* (Mexico City: 1990).

<sup>43</sup> Edgerton, *Heritage of Giotto's Geometry* 8.

<sup>44</sup> Id., 5.



In claiming that the Nahua recognized perspective, we return once again to the question of the difference between depiction and perspective and observe that on fol. 46r the *tlacuilo* has not represented a Franciscan in a particular Franciscan situation; but rather, he has utilized perspective as an attribute that serves to capture the Franciscan condition. Beyond the association with the confessional scrutiny and the inquisitorial interrogation, the gaze of the Franciscan further implies a connection between Euclidian geometry and the notion that God the Logos is the source of creation. Learning to see the world in geometrical forms would constitute one more element in the indoctrination of Indians, something to which the *tlacuilo* would seem to be alluding in the depiction (imperfect as it were) of a cube that recurs in the form of the cube-shaped head. The frontal view of the Franciscan that captures friar's gaze would have the additional effect analyzed by Merleau-Ponty and Jacques Lacan, of allowing the viewer to experience the world (painted or not) as if its objects looked at the observers. This is not the place to explain Lacan and Merleau-Ponty, so I will limit myself to noting that Lacan differentiates between the eye, in which 'geometrical perspective is simply the mapping of space, not sight', and the gaze as an experience of inversion through which the subject finds itself observed by things in the world. To the *trompe-l'oeil* (the illusion created by the semblance that painting is something other than it is) and the *dompe-l'oeil* (the taming of the gaze that leads to the lowering of the eyes), we must add the *clein-l'oeil* with which the *tlacuilo* provides a self-reflective statement about his clever depiction of the missionary orders. The *tlacuilo* as it were frustrates the appetite of the eye that must be fed, 'the eye filled with voracity, the evil eye'.<sup>45</sup>

The frontal depiction of the Franciscan has as its complement the profile view of the Dominican. The depiction of the Dominican is not completely devoid of linear perspective as the image also embodies volume. The apparently awkwardly drawn left arm captures the

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<sup>45</sup> This most schematic discussion of Lacan follows the section "Of the Gaze as *objet petit a*", in Lacan J., *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI*, Sheridan A. (trans.) (New York: 1998) 115. Lacan's discussion of the eye and the gaze builds on the section "The Entertwining – The Chiasm", in Merleau-Ponty M., *The Visible and the Invisible*, Linguis A. (trans.) (Evanston: 1968) 130–155. For an earlier formulation of a reversal of vision in which things see the subject, see Merleau-Ponty M., "Eye and Mind", in idem, *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. C. Dallery (Evanston: 1964) 159–190.

movement of pouring the holy water. The gait of the Dominican shown in the act of baptizing signifies the joy of sacrament given and received in full cognizance of the doctrinal implications and political obligations of accepting the Christian faith. Whereas the Franciscans would administer baptism before properly catechizing Indians, hence without informing them of their obligations, the Dominican emphasis on proper evangelization prior to baptism implied informing Indians of the doctrinal and political obligations. This is the crux of the difference between these two religious orders that the *tlacuilo* adroitly captures in his depiction of the two orders. It is an image that Las Casas and his followers would have found fascinating but that his more repressive brothers would have found questionable. The prominence of the left arm pouring the baptismal waters suggests that the depiction of movement was one of the objectives in the artist's application of perspective. Beyond the movement of the arm, the Dominican radiates spiritual joy in the gait. At the risk of sounding anachronistic or ahistorical, I will allude to a passage in which Merleau-Ponty cites Auguste Rodin to the effect that one of the differences between photography and painting resides in that the latter seeks to record movement while the former inevitably embalms life: 'Painting searches not for the outside of movement but for its secret ciphers, of which there are more subtle than those of which Rodin spoke. All flesh, and even that of the world, radiates beyond itself'.<sup>46</sup> The emphasis would reside obviously not on the difference between photography and painting, but rather on the connection between painting, space, and movement from Altamira to Rodin and, indeed, in Mesoamerican paintings. What might at first sight seem an aberration in the picturing of the left arm as if protruding from the chest may be read against sketches with equal awkwardness in Leonardo or Dürer experimenting on drawing movement. In fact, the *tlacuilo* could have derived the experimentation with movement from the multiple sketches by Dürer circulating in sixteenth-century Mexico. The missionaries' pedagogical effort introduced the Nahuatl to images and technologies to instill three-dimensional perspective. Indeed, the use of the left hand suggests a comment on *camera obscura* as an optical device that produces inversions.

In reflecting on the depiction of the essential traits that define Franciscans and Dominicans, the *tlacuilo* could very well be seeking to pro-

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<sup>46</sup> Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" 186.

tect himself and his community from the evil eye, from the destructive fury of the missionaries' will to objectify Nahua culture. Then again, the depiction of the two monastic orders might have fulfilled a taxonomic function, enabling the Nahua to understand and place in *perspective* the two main lines of indoctrination. As argued by Marin, it is the case in all forms of representation, whether in the mode of the judicial sentence (e.g., this is a Dominican, a Franciscan) or that of the pictorial form, that a sense of empowerment is being exercised over the represented. We may further liken this practice to Michael Taussig's observation on Cuna figurines: 'Yet the important point about what I call the magic of mimesis is the same – namely that “in some way or another” the making and existence of the artifact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’.<sup>47</sup>

### *Perspective as Vigilance*

In this article I have argued that the *tlacuilo* invents a pictorial vocabulary for depicting colonial religious and secular institutions, as well as individuals and objects of which they are comprised. The *tlacuilo* also alludes to spiritual economies of conversion. She records the sense of being observed by the colonial regime and offers a return of the gaze in which the observer is surprised by the *tlacuilo*'s lucid record of the colonial order. In this looking back, the *tlacuilo* reveals a self-conscious understanding of linear perspective; instead of representing the features of an individual friar as in European portraits, finds a way of encapsulating the privileged place of sacramental penance among the Franciscans. By portraying this characteristic of the Franciscan order, the *tlacuilo* would have made Dominican observers reflect on how Indians perceived the different orders, perhaps also prompting them to consider their failure properly to evangelize the Nahua forty years after the introduction of Christianity. Having requested the codex, the missionaries found themselves portrayed by a subject who reminded them how fragile was the grounding of faith among the new Christians.

The penitentiary vigilance of the Franciscans responds to the eminent danger of apostasy at a time when missionaries from the different

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<sup>47</sup> Taussig M., *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: 1993) 13.

orders wondered whether the native neophytes were disguising their old beliefs under the semblance of Christian practices. Missionaries and lay authorities feared apostasy because of their hardened subjects' savvy negotiation of the inner workings of the colonial order. The *tlacuilo*'s juxtaposition of apostle and apostate, for example, is marked by the Mesoamerican glyph of water. This defines an *inside-inside out* topology of conquest, while at the same time denoting both a raging river and the real waters of baptism (as if the pictograph were an ironic allegory that stated one thing and meant another). The mental image of *ladinos* leading Indians into rebellion must have suddenly occurred vividly to the colonial viewer confronted by the *tlacuilo*'s sleight-of-hand mastery of European forms for purposes that didn't merely testify to effective religious indoctrination and aesthetic schooling.

In situating the production of Telleriano-Remensis within the history of objectivity, we have observed that the production of the album participated in a chiasmus between subject and object, identifiable with the Cartesian philosophy. Descartes and the grammarians of Port Royal effectively formalized the epistemic mutations that emerged in the course of recording novel American natural and cultural phenomena. Given this epistemic chiasmus, the project of creating an album of Mesoamerican culture was conceived as a way of objectivizing the written modalities of religious and historical pictograms. The *tlacuilo* was thus caught up in a project that sought to neutralize the power of the pictograms by requesting that he picture his gods in an artificial setting meant for extirpation purposes. The *tlacuilo* of ancient times (having perhaps survived into the present) produced paintings of sacred forms for the use of healers and other spiritual leaders, whereas the missionaries placed him in a situation in which objectivization functioned like an evil eye trained upon ruining Mesoamerican life-forms. The *tlacuilo*, however, knew well that the meaning and power of the pictograms exceeded the grasp of the missionaries, as manifest in their glosses. The pictographs were a means of producing knowledge of the differentiated missionary orders that provided Nahua spiritual leaders with the weapons to neutralize the friars' sphere of influence.

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## JOHN CALVIN AND MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE ON THE EYE

Lee Palmer Wandel

Son essence est incompréhensible, tellement que sa maiesté est cachée bien loin de tous nos sens, mais il a imprimé certaines marques de sa gloire en toutes ses œuvres, voire si claires et notables, que toute excuse d'ignorance est ostée aux plus rudes et hébétéz du monde.

John Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne*, 1560, Book I, Chapter V.<sup>1</sup>

Aussi n'est-il pas croyable que toute cette machine n'ait quelques marques empreintes de la main de ce grand architecte, et qu'il n'y ait quelque image és choses du monde, rapportant aucunement à l'ouvrier qui les a basties et formées.

Michel de Montaigne, 'Apologie de Raimond Sebond', *Essais*, 1580, Book II, Chapter 12.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne*, ed. Benoit J.-D. Vol. I (Paris: 1957) 68. In the editions of 1541–1557, the text differed: 'Veu que Dieu a voulu que la fin principale de la vie bien-heureuse fust située en la cognoissance de son nom, afin qu'il ne semble point advis qu'il vueille forclorre a aucuns l'entrée à félicité, il se manifeste à tous clairement. Car comme ainsi soit que de nature il soit incompréhensible et caché à l'intelligence humaine, il a engravé en chacune (1541–1545: 'en un chacun') de ses œuvres certains signes de sa maiesté, par lesquez il se donne à cognoistre à nous selon nostre petite capacité. Le dy signes si notoires et évidens que toute excuse d'ignorance est ostée aux plus aveugles et aux plus rudes du monde'.

Ford Lewis Battles's translation of the Latin differs at a couple of points: 'Indeed, his essence is incomprehensible; hence, his divineness far escapes all human perception. But upon his individual works he has engraved unmistakable marks of his glory, so clear and so prominent that even unlettered and stupid folk cannot plead the excuse of ignorance'. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. McNeil J.T., ed. Battles F.L. (Philadelphia: 1960) I: 52 [Hereafter *Institutes*].

<sup>2</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, eds. P. Villey and V.L. Saulnier (Paris: 2004) 446. This particular passage seems to have undergone no revisions, *Les Essais de Montaigne, Reproduction typographique*, ed. Armaingaud A. (Paris: 1927) II: 99–100.

Donald Frame translates this text: 'And it is not credible that this whole machine should not have on it some marks imprinted by the hand of this great architect, and that there should not be some picture in the things of this world that somewhat represents the workman who has built and formed them' [*The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Frame D.M. (Stanford: 1976) 326].

In scholarship on early modern texts, Calvin and Montaigne appear together rarely.<sup>3</sup> In some ways, that is not surprising: in the Library of Congress system of classification, John Calvin's works are to be found under BX9420 – among works of spirituality – while Michel de Montaigne has been assigned PQ1643, among works of literature, their works often stored on different floors, the spatial distance a simple extension of the disciplinary division of texts into categories: literature, theology, philosophy, each separated from the others. The assignation of Calvin's and Montaigne's texts to discrete disciplines, each with its own methods, syntax, and shared vocabulary, has also led to those texts being read through certain analytic lenses and not others: Calvin, through the lens of theology or church history;<sup>4</sup> Montaigne, through the lens of philosophy or literary studies.<sup>5</sup> No works among Calvin's enormous oeuvre belong to the canon of French or Latin literature; none of Montaigne's *Essays* appears among works of Reformation theology.<sup>6</sup> And yet, if one believes Descartes, Montaigne offered the single most devastating critique of Christian epistemology of the sixteenth century, far more powerful, and more destructive, than anything Martin Luther ever wrote.

The separation of Calvin's and Montaigne's works from one another is a loss at many levels. Works now divided into disciplines circulated quite differently in the sixteenth century than they do now, read according to curiosity, word of mouth, taste, or language. Neither Calvin nor Montaigne rest easily in the categories to which each has been assigned: the volumes debating whether Calvin was a theologian,

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<sup>3</sup> And when they do, it is usually to contrast them, as R. Hoopes does in "Fideism and Skepticism during the Renaissance: Three Major Witnesses", *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 4 (1951) 319–347.

<sup>4</sup> For an important exception to this, see Frisch A., "In a Sacramental Mode: Jean de Léry's Calvinist Ethnography", *Representations* 77 (2003) 82–106; and her fuller development in Chapter 5, "Presence", of *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill: 2004).

<sup>5</sup> For a recent example of this division, see Schreiner S.E., "Appearances and Reality in Luther, Montaigne, and Shakespeare", *The Journal of Religion* 83 (2003), especially at 357–358. For a particularly splendid engagement with the question of Montaigne's relationship to 'philosophy', see Maclean I., "'Le país au delà': Montaigne and philosophical speculation", in McFarlane I.D. – Maclean I. (eds.), *Montaigne: Essays in Memory of Richard Sayce* (Oxford: 1982) 101–132.

<sup>6</sup> Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani details echoes of Augustine's *Confessions* in the *Essais*, but finds the connection autobiographical, rather than theological, "Les *Confessions* de Saint Augustin dans les *Essais* de Montaigne," Peacock N. – Supple J. (eds.), *Lire les Essais de Montaigne: Actes du Colloque de Glasgow 1997* (Paris: 2001) 211–226.



Montaigne a philosopher testify to the awkwardness of those modern categories.<sup>7</sup> Most important, the disciplining of these two authors' works into discrete categories obscures a shared point of departure: neither Calvin nor Montaigne found knowledge to be stable in precisely those ways that allow communities collectively to divide it up into categories. In an age when doctors of theology divided over the meaning of specific words and sentences in their common sacred text and navigators described flora and fauna that could not be found in traditional natural history, Europeans had lost precisely that sense that knowledge is something stable, stable enough to be organized, and organized into categories everyone acknowledges as self-evident.<sup>8</sup>

Both the *Institutes* and the *Essays* address directly the epistemological crisis of the sixteenth century. As Calvin wrote his reader in the preface to the French translation, the *Institutes* seeks to provide a 'path' – to lay down a line among the brambles of competing claims to certain knowledge of God and to articulate a stable hermeneutic for approaching Scripture, a site where, as Calvin said, humankind could find God's self revelation. The *Essays*, so often read in terms of 'skepticism', open by grounding book and self in their common materiality, anchoring words not by defining them but by locating them in the material form of the codex and the tangible body of the author.<sup>9</sup>

Both Calvin and Montaigne took up the codex to address the instability of knowledge. Each generated a new genre to address that instability. Both *institutio* and *essai* were 'new', that is, without any recognizable precedent or tradition.<sup>10</sup> While the two genres are different from one another – the one a manual of instruction, the other a collection of personal reflections – they both engage directly with the

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<sup>7</sup> On Calvin, see most recently Zachman R., *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2006) and *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame: 2007). For a recent contribution to the debate on Montaigne's place in philosophy, see Hartle A., *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* (New York: 2003), which argues that Montaigne articulated a notion of 'accidental' philosophy in the *Essais*.

<sup>8</sup> On the instabilities of early modern knowledge and its organization, see Kenny N., *The Palace of Secrets: Béroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge* (Oxford: 1991); Enenkel K.A.E. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Cognition and the Book: Typologies of Formal Organization of Knowledge in the Printed Book of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Nakam G., *Montaigne: La Manière et la Matière*, 2nd edition (Paris: 2006).

<sup>10</sup> While Montaigne's 'essai' is widely recognized as new, scholars have sought to link Calvin's *Institutio* to older forms, such as the catechism or the loci communes, even as they recognize discrepancies between the different texts.

vulnerability of texts to multiple readings;<sup>11</sup> the relationship between author and reader; the ways in which the codex structures reading; the materialities of the book – its portability, its linearity – and the ways in which the book's particular material properties enabled intimacy between author and reader.

The passage with which I opened appears within the context of Calvin's discussion of knowledge of God, "The First Book of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, which concerns knowing God in his title and quality of Creator and as sovereign Governor of the world", ["Le premier liure de l'Institution chrestienne, qvi est de cognoistre Dieu en tiltre & qualité de Createur, & souuerain Gouverneur du monde"] more immediately within the context of Chapter V, God's self-disclosure in his creation of the world and his continual government of it, ["Que la puissance de Dieu reluit en la creation du monde & au gouuernement continuel"].<sup>12</sup> The second appears within Montaigne's 'apology' for the claims of a Spanish natural theologian, Raymond Sebond, which he then chose to publish within the context of his *Essays*.<sup>13</sup>

At one level, both works challenged the epistemological claims of natural theology. Natural theology, crudely put, makes a series of claims: first, that nature, as God's creation, makes visible both God's design – for all space and all time – and God's intent; second, that human beings, through the application of their natural reason, can deduct from the observation of nature God's design for all creation and God's intent for all time; third, that nature presents transparently and obviously God's design and God's intent; fourth, that human reason is a constant and reliable tool for reading nature; and fifth, that human eyes are mechanically constant: receptacles for visual data that is itself without ambivalence or opacity. Calvin and Montaigne famously rejected the reliability of human reason as a tool to read nature. In this, they were by no means alone. But they focused on human eyes as constant tools for receiving the data of nature. They rejected the epistemological claims of natural theology neither by according, as Luther and other evangelical theologians did, Scripture exclusive legibility, nor by denying God's visibility in creation.

<sup>11</sup> Greene T.A., *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: 1986).

<sup>12</sup> John Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne* (Geneva, I. Crespin: 1560) 1 and 8.

<sup>13</sup> On Montaigne's translation of Sebond, see Hendrick P., *Montaigne et Sebond: L'art de la traduction* (Paris: 1996).

Quite the contrary, both Calvin and Montaigne celebrate the spectacle of nature: Montaigne throughout the *Essays* directs his readers' eyes to look, to see how ants work together, to observe dogs, elephants, horses, cats.<sup>14</sup> Calvin directs his readers' eyes to 'this magnificent theater of heaven and earth, crammed with innumerable miracles', to stars, to sunlight.<sup>15</sup> Nor were ants or stars to be read as metaphors, as something natural which stands for something else. For both Montaigne and Calvin, natural phenomena were to be viewed as manifestations – things to which human beings have been created to be 'spectators'.<sup>16</sup> Both assert that God reveals himself in the natural world. Both celebrate nature as a place for God's self-disclosure. They dispute, what human beings can see.

Both the *Essays* and the *Institutes* explore complexly 'seeing' and 'not seeing', the relationship between physical sight and cognition, between vision and understanding. Both deploy texts to call into question the relationship between mind and eye, to challenge the model of natural theology, in which the eye serves as receptical or medium for data transmitted from nature to the mind, again, in that model, which is the seat of reason.

Both state, God *imprinted marks* in creation. While it is intriguing to consider if Montaigne's formulation intimates a closer familiarity with the *Institutes*, for the moment, I would like to dwell on those words, *imprimé/empreintes* and *marques*. The first term invokes for the reader precisely the process by which the text before him or her has been created, the printing of letters on a sheet of paper.

Both Calvin and Montaigne make this claim in the midst of texts which are without engravings, woodcuts – imprinted images – of any kind. The texts present the eyes of their readers exclusively those visual signs, marks, by which we read: the particular form of each individual letter; the spaces between letters that signal words; the spatial markers of paragraphs and sections [Figs. 1–2]. Both authors deployed a range

<sup>14</sup> On 'nature' more generally in Montaigne, see Schneider B., *Nature und Art in Montaignes Essais* (Paris: 1996).

<sup>15</sup> *Institutio*, Book II, Chapter VI, section 1. See also, Book I, Chapter V, section 8, Chapter VI, section 2, and Chapter XIV, section 20.

<sup>16</sup> *Institutio*, Book I, Chapter VI, section 2. On Calvin and the visibility of God, see my "Post tenebras lux: lumière et présence dans les temples réformés," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 152 (2006) 375–390. On Nature and Providence in Calvin, see Schreiner S., *The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin* (Durham: 1991).

## ESSAIS DE M. DE MONTA.

nous aux animaux; & cōbien ils ont de part à nos plus grands priuileges; & avec combien de vray semblance on nous les ap-  
parie; certes i'en rabats beaucoup de nostre presomption; &  
me demets volontiers de cette royauté ~~vaine~~ & imaginaire,  
qu'on nous dōne sur les autres creatures. Quād tout cela en  
feroit à dire, si y a-il vn certain respect, qui nous attache, & vn  
general deuoir d'humanité, nō aux bestes seulemēt, qui ont  
vie & sentimēt, mais aux arbres mesmes & aux plātes. Nous  
deuons la iustice aux hommes, & la grace & la benignité aux  
autres creatures, qui en peuuent estre capables. Il y a quelque  
commerce entre elles & nous, & quelque obligation mu-  
tuelle. Les Turcs ont des aumosnes & des hospitaux pour les  
bestes: Les Romains auoient vn soing public de la nourriture  
des oyces, par la vigilance desquelles leur Capitoile auoit esté  
sauuē: Les Atheniens ordonnerent que les mules & mulets,  
qui auoient seruy au bastiment du temple appellé Hecatomp-  
edon fussent libres; & qu'on les laissast paistre par tout sans  
empeschement. Cimon fit vne sepulture honorable aux iu-  
ments, avec lesquelles il auoit gaigné par trois fois le pris de la  
course aux ieux Olympiques: L'ancien Xantippus fit enterrer  
son chien sur vn chef, en la coste de la mer, qui en à depuis re-  
tenu le nom: Et Plutarque faisoit, dit-il, conscience de vedre  
& enuoier à la boucherie, pour vn legier profit, vn bœuf qui  
l'auoit long temps seruy.

*Apologie de Raimond Sebond.*

## CHAP. XII.

**C**'EST à la verité vne tref-vtile & grande partie que  
la science; ceux qui la mesprisent tesmoignent assez  
leur bestise: mais ie n'estime pas pourtant sa valeur  
iusques à cette mesure extreme qu'aucuns luy at-  
tribuent: comme Herillus le philosophe, qui logeoit en elle le

Fig. 1. Michel de Montaigne, "Apologie de Raimond Sebond", *Essais*, Bor-  
deaux Copy, <http://artfl.uchicago.edu/images/montaigne/0183v.jpg>.

of visual clues for organizing texts: the spatial form of paragraphs; different typefonts and numbering systems to divide text into chapter and book. Montaigne, in addition, set apart visually and in typefont what subsequent editors have identified as quotations from classical and contemporary texts, though Montaigne himself tended not to identify his authorities or explicitly differentiate author's voices so much as visually, through placement and typefont, distinguish his own voice from the places where he was self-consciously quoting an authority [Fig. 3]. One might even say, he drew upon those conventions to confound generations of readers, who find the spatial organization at odds with what they take to be the 'content' of the text.

Both were among the most self-conscious of sixteenth-century authors, not only in addressing explicitly their readers – which many did. Both the *Institutes* and the *Essays* underwent multiple and changing editions over years. Both Calvin and Montaigne were attentive to the visual markers by which printing organized marks to become words, sentences, paragraphs, sections, chapters – the various tiers of organization of speaking and thought. Both also addressed their readers about the texts those readers were about to 'enter', through words evoking a spatial relationship among author, text, and reader.

The *Institutes* is self-consciously an itinerary, self-consciously seeking to train its reader to follow a path, through the physical structure of the codex – from title page to printer's emblem, from Book I through Books II and III to Book IV, from page 1 to page 684.<sup>17</sup> As the reader follows the path through the *Institutes*, s/he acquires greater knowledge to read Scripture, which is Calvin's express purpose in publishing it:

[...] For I trust that God out of his infinite goodness will permit me to persevere with unwavering patience in the path of his holy calling [...]

Moreover, it has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling. For I believe I have so embraced the sum of religion in all its parts, and *have arranged it in such an order*, that if anyone rightly grasps it, it will not be difficult for him to determine what he ought especially to seek in Scripture, and to what end he ought to relate its contents. If, *after this road has, as it were, been paved*, I shall publish any interpretations of Scripture, I shall always condense them, because I

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<sup>17</sup> I make this argument more fully in *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (New York: 2006) Chapter 4.

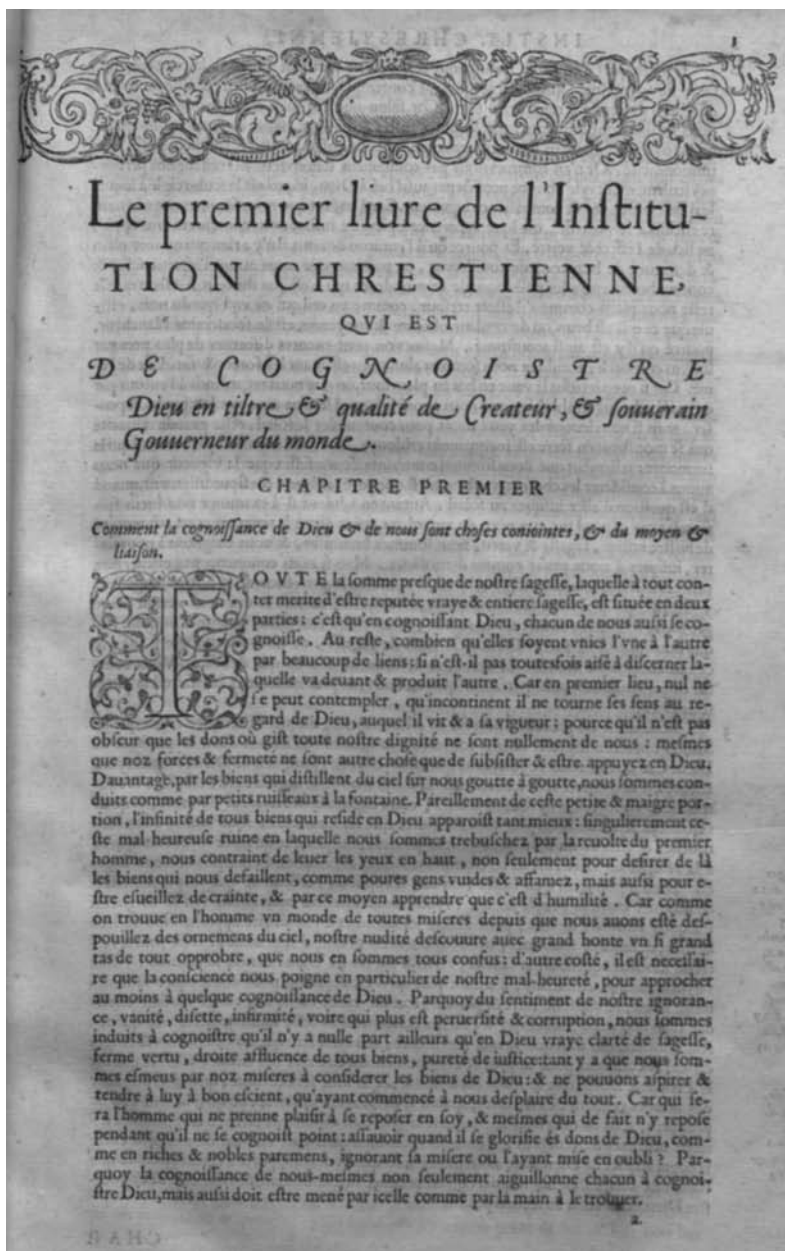


Fig. 2. John Calvin, *Institution de la religion chrestienne: nouvellement mise en quatre livres*. [Geneva, Jean Crespin: 1560], 1. Special Collections, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin – Madison.

## LIVRE SECOND.

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*Predoné que lupis, fallaces vulpibus addit,**Atque vbi per varios annos per mille figuras**Egit, lethæo purgatos flumine tandem**Rursus ad humane renocat primordia forme.*

Si elle auoit esté vaillante, la logeoient au corps d'un Lyon; si voluptueuse, en celui d'un pourceau; si lâche, en celui d'un cerf ou d'un lièvre; si malicieuse, en celui d'un renard; ainsi du reste, iusques à ce que purifiée par ce chastiment elle reprenoit le corps de quelque autre homme.

*Ipse ego, nam memini, Troiani tempore belli**Panthoides Euphorbus eram.*

Quant à ce coulinage là d'entre nous & les bestes, ie n'en fay pas grand recepte: Ny de ce aussi que plusieurs nations & notamment des plus anciennes & plus nobles, ont non seulement receu des bestes, à leur societé & cōpagnie, mais leur ont donné un rang bien loing au dessus d'eux, les estimant tantost familières, & fauories de leurs dieux; & les ayant en respect & reuerence plus qu'humaine, & d'autres ne reconnoissant autre Dieu, ny autre diuinité qu'elles: *belux a barbaris propter bene finem conseruati.*

*crocodilon adorant**Pars hæc, illa pauet saturam serpentibus Ibin,**Effigies sacri hic nitet aurea cercopitheci**hic piscem fluminis, illic**Oppida tota canem venerantur.*

Et l'interpretation mesme que Plutarque donne à cet erreur, qui est tresbien prise, leur est encores honorable: Car il dit que ce n'estoit le chat, ou le bœuf (pour exemple) que les Egyptiens adoroient, mais qu'ils adoroient en ces bestes là, quelque image des opérations diuines: En cette-cy la patience, en cet autre la viuacité, ou quelque autre effect, & ainsi des autres. Mais quand ie rencontre parmi les opinions plus moderées, les discours qui essayent à montrer la prochaine ressemblance de

Z. iiij

Fig. 3. Michel de Montaigne, 'De la Cruauté', *Essais*, Bordeaux Copy, <http://artfl.uchicago.edu/images/montaigne/0183.jpg>

shall have no need to undertake long doctrinal discussions, and to digress into commonplaces.<sup>18</sup>

With words in this book, Calvin paves a road – a line through a landscape – which, when followed, will keep others from becoming lost, diverted, stumbling, wandering into digressions. The words connote spatial relationships – roads through landscapes – and an orientation, a specific situating in regard to those landscapes. Those words occurred before Europeans had two-dimensional representations of the roads that traversed the European landscape.<sup>19</sup> Although sixteenth-century maps of the Holy Land represented the movement of biblical figures – Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Paul – across the landscape,<sup>20</sup> the maps of sixteenth-century Europe did not represent roads: roads were known through walking or riding them, though word of mouth and then the actual experience of them. The codex offered another linear path,

<sup>18</sup> *Institutes*, Vol. I, 4–5, italics mine. The Latin and French prefaces differed. The 1559 Latin edition of the *Institutio* reads: '[...] quia Deum pro immensa sua bonitate datum mihi confido, ut in cursu sanctae suae vocationis aequabili tolerantia perseverem. Cuius rei novum in hac editione documentum piis lectoribus exhibeo. Porro hoc mihi in isto labore propositum fuit, sacrae theologiae candidatos ad divini verbi lectionem ita praeparare et instruere, ut et facilem ad eam aditum habere, et inoffenso in ea gradu pergere queant. Siquidem religionis summam omnibus partibus sic mihi complexus esse videor, et eo quoque ordine digessisse, ut si quis eam recte tenuerit, ei non sit difficile statuere et quid potissimum quaerere in scriptura, et quem in scopum quidquid in ea continetur referre debeat. Itaque, hac veluti strata via, si quas posthac scripturae enarrationes edidero, quia non necesse habeo de dogmatibus longas disputationes instituere, et si in locos communes evagari, eas compendio semper astringam'. *Institutio*, 1–4.

The sense of path is stronger in the Latin than the French. The 1561 edition of the French reads: 'Car ie me confi e que Dieu par sa bonté souveraine me donnera de perseverer avec patience invincible au cours de sa sainte vocation, comme i'en donne de nouveau bonnes enseignes à tous Chrestiens. Or mon but a esté de tellement preparer et instruire ceux qui se voudront adonner à l'estude de Theologie, à ce qu'ils ayent facile accez à lire l'Ecriture sainte, et à profi ter et se bien avancer à l'entendre, et tenir le bon chemin et droit sans choper. Car ie pense avoir tellement compris la somme de la religion chrestienne en toutes ses parties, et l'avoir digerée en tel ordre, que celui qui aura bien compris la forme d'enseigner que i'ay suivye, pourra aisément iuger et se resoudre de ce qu'il doit chercher en l'Ecriture, et à quel but il faut rapporter le contenu d'icelle. Et pourtant il n'est ia besoin qu'en mes Commentaires, ausquels i'expose les livres de l'Ecriture sainte, i'entre en longues disputes des matieres qui sont là traitées, veu qu le present livre est une adresse generale pour guider ceux qui desirent d'estre aydez: comme de fait on voit qu ie n'ayme point d'extravaguer ny user de longue prolixité'. "Iean Calvin au lecteur," *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, Baum W. et al. (eds.), Vol. III (Braunschweig: 1865) 7–8.

<sup>19</sup> See my "Exile in the Reformation," forthcoming in Stefanovska M. – Sabeian D. (eds.), *Spaces of the Self*.

<sup>20</sup> Melion W., "Ad ductum itineris et dispositionem mansionum ostendam: Meditation, Vocation, and Sacred History in Abraham Ortelius's *Parergon*", *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999) 49–72.



from beginning to end, from Book I to Book IV, which one also knew through the actual experience of reading left to right, front to back.

Montaigne, who also addresses his reader directly [Fig. 4], articulates a different relationship among text, reader, and author:<sup>21</sup>

C'est icy un livre de bonne foy, lecteur. Il t'advertit dès l'entrée, que je ne m'y suis proposé aucune fin, que domestique et privée. Je n'y ay eu nulle consideration de ton service, ny de ma gloire. Mes forces ne sont pas capables d'un tel dessein. Je l'ay voué à la commodité particuliere de mes parens et amis: à ce que m'ayant perdu (ce qu'ils ont à faire bien tost) ils y puissent retrouver aucuns traits de mes conditions et humeurs, et que par ce moyen ils nourrissent plus entiere et plus vifve, la connoissance qu'ils ont eu de moy. Si c'eust esté pour rechercher la faveur du monde, je me fusse mieux paré et me presanterois en une marche étudiée. Je veus qu'on m'y voie en ma façon simple, naturelle et ordinaire, sans contention et artifice: car c'est moy que je peins. Mes défauts s'y liront au vif, et ma forme naïfve, autant que la reverence publique me l'a permis. Que si j'eusse esté entre ces nations qu'on dict vivre encore sous la douce liberté des premiers loix de nature, je t'asseure que je m'y fusse tres-volontiers peint tout entier, et tout nud. Ainsi, lecteur, je suis moymesmes la matiere de mon livre: ce n'est pas raison que tu employes ton loisir en un subject si frivole et si vain. A Dieu donz, de Montaigne, ce premier de Mars mille cinq cens quatre vingts.<sup>22</sup>

Like Calvin, Montaigne draws upon spatial terms in speaking about the text – the codex has an entrance, 'l'entrée'. Montaigne 'paints',

<sup>21</sup> See Peacock – Supple (eds.), *Lire les Essais de Montaigne*.

<sup>22</sup> *Les Essais* 3. Cf. Delègue Y., *Montaigne et la mauvaise foi: L'écriture de la vérité* (Paris: 1998).

Frame's translation makes a series of choices about Montaigne's meaning: 'This book was written in good faith, reader. It warns you from the outset that in it I have set myself no goal but a domestic and private one. I have had no thought of serving either you or my own glory. My powers are inadequate for such a purpose. I have dedicated it to the private convenience of my relatives and friends, so that when they have lost me (as soon they must), they may recover here some features of my habits and temperament, and by this means keep the knowledge they have had of me more complete and alive.

If I had written to seek the world's favor, I should have bedecked myself better, and should present myself in a studied posture. I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My defects will here be read to the life, and also my natural form, as far as respect for the public has allowed. Had I been placed among those nations which are said to live still in the sweet freedom of nature's first laws, I assure you I should very gladly have portrayed myself here entire and wholly naked.

Thus, reader, I am myself the matter of my book; you would be unreasonable to spend your leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject.

So farewell. Montaigne, this first day of March, fifteen hundred and eighty'. *The Complete Essays* 2.

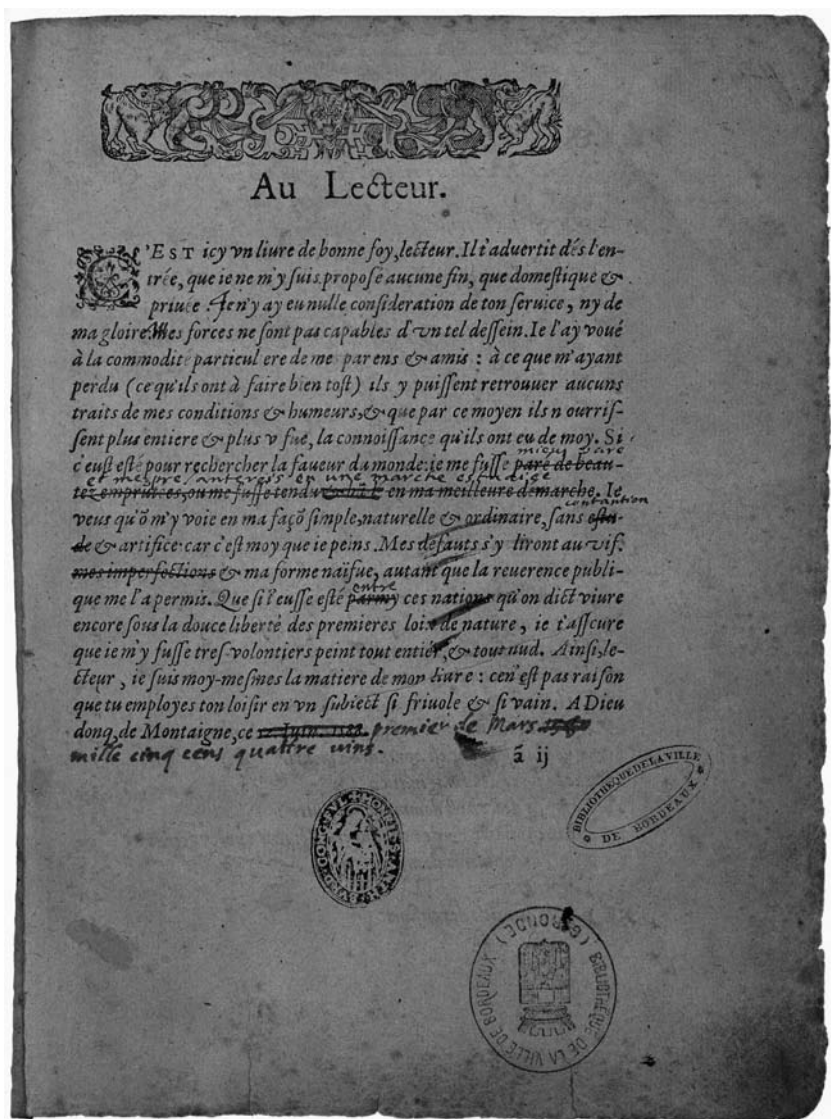


Fig. 4. Michel de Montaigne, 'Au Lecteur', *Essais*, Bordeaux Copy, <http://artfl.uchicago.edu/images/montaigne/0000b.jpg>.

albeit in black-and-white, through the linear form of the sentence and the chapter. He is the 'matiere' of the book. He is himself rendered in the linear structure of the sentence, the paragraph, and the chapter. With the matter of its content, his reader reads his faults, his form. But Montaigne eschewed the path of the codex, from Book I ultimately to Book III, from Chapter 1 to each final chapter of each book: his powers are incapable of any such 'design'.<sup>23</sup> His reader is denied precisely that path that Calvin constructs in the entirety of the *Institutes*, in ways that echo Montaigne's explicit argument for the unknowability of God.

Both authors direct their readers' eyes: through printing's system of signs – spaces and typefont – and through their direct instructions, *how* to read their books. Both speak of their books as something physical – a road paved, a self painted – which they explicitly offer their readers as a *thing* to read. Both do so on the printed page, in which those whose eyes are trained to read the inkings discern letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and books.

What is to be read? Not those 'words' that evangelicals had claimed were self-evident, 'clear', and that subsequently sundered Christian from Christian. The other term Calvin and Montaigne both used, 'marques', implicitly calls into question the models of eye and mind at the heart of natural theology: a theory of optics in which the eye mechanically receives what is 'out there' in nature and the mind 'reads' nature as a simple text of fixed codes, universally recognized and known vocabulary and syntax, and singular, transparent, meaning. Both Calvin and Montaigne rejected the premises of the different models of the eye still at play in the sixteenth century, whether a model of intromission or one of extramission:<sup>24</sup> the eye was a medium through which optical data passed, the data was constant from eye to eye, and the mind received that data. Both complicated 'the eye' as well as 'the mind'.

'Marks' denies the possibility that 'not-seeing' is a narrow problem of physical ability – the human eye can 'see' them in a mechanical sense of the organ functioning. As Calvin says, so clear and notable, that ignorance can be the only excuse, and that among the rudest and dullest of the world. 'Not-seeing', for Calvin, is inseparable from not-knowing – eye and mind are not discrete entities. 'Marks' denotes

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<sup>23</sup> See McKinley M.B., *Les terrains vagues des Essais: Itinéraires et intertextes* (Paris: 1996).

<sup>24</sup> Lindberg D., *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: 1976).

something which is in and of itself ontologically visible and yet is not, for some human beings, legible, or even 'visible'.

In Book I of the *Institutes*, Calvin takes up the ways in which human beings have made themselves 'blind' to God's self-disclosure. While the 'blindness' is physically experienced, it is not the blindness of the physically disabled, but, as Calvin details, a kind of disabled perception: the substitution of idols for God's own creation, the human disposition to make the world in our own image, the creation of false cults. As Calvin argues in Book II, on the knowledge of God the Redeemer, that human incapacity to read revelation in nature is part of the reason why God became Incarnate: to reach human beings in ways that they could hear and see, through their ears and eyes. For Calvin, the problem is agonizing, the palpable, sensible, visible presence of God, and the human failure to sense, to see:

Voyla comment tant de si belles lampes alumées au bastiment du monde nous esclairent en vain, pour nous faire voir la gloire de Dieu, veu qu'elles nous environnent tellement de leurs rayons, qu'elles ne nous peuvent conduire iusques au droit chemin. Vray est qu'elles font bien sortir quelques estincelles, mais le tout s'estouffe devant que venir en clarté de durée. Pourtant l'Apostre apres avoir dit que le monde est comme une effigie ou spectacle des choses invisibles, adiousté tantost apres que c'est par foy qu'on cognoist qu'il a esté aussi bien compassé et apropié par la parole de Dieu (Heb. 11,3): signifiant par ces mots, combien que la maiesté invisible de Dieu soit manifestée par tels miroirs, que nous n'avons pas les yeux pour la contempler iusques à ce qu'ils soyent illuminez par la revelation secrete qui nous est donnée d'enhaut.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Institution*, Livre I, Chapitre V, 13: 83-84. Battle's translation mutes in some ways Calvin's emphasis upon visibility: 'It is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, yet they can of themselves in no way lead us into the right path. Surely they strike some sparks, but before their fuller light shines forth these are smothered. For this reason, the apostle, in that very passage where he calls the world the [effigie ou spectacle] of things invisible, adds that through faith we understand that they have been fashioned by God's word [Heb. 11:3] [...] As if this defense may properly be admitted: for a man to pretend that he lacks ears to hear the truth when there are mute creatures with more than melodious voices to declare it; or for a man to claim that he cannot see with his eyes what eyeless creatures point out to him; or for him to plead feebleness of mind when even irrational creatures give instruction! Therefore we are justly denied every excuse when we stray off as wanderers and vagrants even though everything points out the right way [...] yet the fact that men soon corrupt the seed of the knowledge of God, sown in their minds out of the wonderful workmanship of nature [...], must be imputed to their own failing' (*Institutes*, Vol. I, Book I, Chapter V, section 14, 68).

Human corruption, or, as Calvin will argue more fully in Books I and II, human arrogance – that absence of the faith that leads a person to place him or herself in direct obedience to God – makes human beings unable to see what God has revealed. In Book I of the *Institutes*, which is titled, “De cognitione dei creatoris”, Calvin treated both blindness and idolatry, structurally linking the substitution of human-made images for God’s self-disclosure to a cognitive inability to see God where God had revealed himself. For Calvin, the problem is not mechanical: human beings have been given eyes to see, God reveals himself in visible marks throughout Creation. Blindness, for Calvin, resides in the nexus between human eye and human mind: the ignorant cannot see. It is not simply, they do not know what they are seeing. They cannot see. Their blindness, while not caused by the failure of the eye to function, is not purely mental or psychosomatic. Their eyes are not perceiving what is before them.

In a number of the *Essays* as well as the Apology, Montaigne found in accounts of the ‘New World’ evidence for the cultural embeddedness of how human beings make sense of what they see.<sup>26</sup> Calvin never engaged as explicitly with those accounts, and yet, the sense of scriptural hermeneutics that pervades the *Institutes* partakes of the same complex conceptualization of interpretation: that different human beings interpret God’s word differently; that those interpretations are embedded in ways that individuals do not recognize; that interpretation is deeply subjective, that is, the eye is in the person doing the seeing. For both Calvin and Montaigne, interpretation is neither mechanical nor universally constant, not with regard to scripture, not with regard to experience, not with regard to what one sees.

For neither Calvin nor Montaigne was the eye merely a medium for receiving external information, or some window through which the mind apprehends the world or the world could see a man’s soul. For neither was the eye transparent or translucent, a mechanical device, or a window. The human eye could see the heavens, the order of nature, the behavior of ants – without it, humankind could not be the spectator to the theater of God’s glory. But its existence did not mean that humankind could ‘see’ in that more complex sense of grasping what it was before the eyes ‘out there’. The term ‘marks’ posits a distinction

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<sup>26</sup> Best known and most studied is “Des cannibales”, Book I, Chapter XXXI of the *Essays*.

between the mechanics of vision and what we might call visual cognition – both of which Calvin and Montaigne call ‘seeing’.

Calvin and Montaigne both also rejected natural theology’s conceptualization of the relationship between eye and mind. Both had witnessed, as Europeans ‘saw’ in that physical sense utterly strange plants, unfamiliar animals, unimagined human beings, they gave those plants, animals, and human beings familiar analogies, names, encodings. Both had witnessed bitter divisions over the meanings of individual words. Neither held that the mind simply applied a template, fixed and stable, to optical data. In part, as Montaigne suggested so dramatically in the Apology, the eye is not a reliable tool, an instrument constant from one head to the next. One person’s vision could be utterly different from another’s, not simply of color or distance, but of shape: the squeezed eye saw shapes differently. Montaigne explicitly rejected those models in which the mind simply received optical data: those models did not allow for the individuality of sight – the variation from one human being to the next. Both Calvin and Montaigne posited a very different sense of the eye – none of those models allowed for the possibility that the eye might not see what was visible, those ‘marks’. The problem, for both, also did not reside in some simple processing of optical data. For both, the problem resided precisely in the assumption that the eye ‘received’ optical data the mind then sorted according to some template that was separate from the human mind, abstract, in modern terms, ‘objective’.

The two shared a deep wariness of the human mind. Both found ‘presumption’ – a sense that the human mind could understand all things, including God – a sin at once essential to humanity and that which most obstructed piety.<sup>27</sup> Calvin largely dismissed human ‘reason’, an activity of the mind, as arrogant.<sup>28</sup> While Montaigne addressed himself far more extensively and directly to the relationship between experience – that data which was supposed to be received through all the senses – and knowledge, he, too, was particularly attentive to the

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<sup>27</sup> Frame D., “Montaigne’s Chapter De la praesumption (II, xvii): Some Observations”, in Heller L.M. – Atance F.R. (eds.), *Montaigne: regards sur les Essais* (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: 1986) 61–68.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, *Institution*, Book I, Chapter V, section 12.

mind as that part of human beings which interpreted.<sup>29</sup> In the Apology, Montaigne explicitly questioned, whether the senses reliably convey any data that is constant over time and human difference; whether emotions and moods affect thought processes in ways of which we are not conscious; whether there could ever be the kind of 'reason' natural theologians had tended to construe as a constant tool, something the mind did, which any mind could do, provided the proper training.<sup>30</sup> For neither Calvin nor Montaigne was the mind a discrete and constant tool, a thing apart, which could take raw somatic data and analyze it, to produce some kind of stable 'knowledge'. For both, the mind was not something functioning apart from human frailty, human self-referentiality – as Calvin argued in Book I of the *Institutes* and Montaigne at the end of the Apology, only God could be truly autonomous in that sense. For both, the human mind was essentially subjective – inseparable from the person, the body, the life of each individual human being, itself integrated into a subjectivity that did not divide between mental and physical function.

But to stop here is to miss the import of the two passages with which I began. God gave human beings eyes, in Calvin's words, he made humankind spectators. For both, God made Creation, in all its visibility. For both, God is everywhere to be seen – not in His person, but the 'marks', the inkings on the blank expanse of paper. He has made those marks, imprinted them, for humankind to see. The problem for both resides in that paradox of not-seeing what is ontologically visible.

With that, we return to the categories with which I opened. Those categories have in common with the problem of not-seeing an interpretive move, a 'making sense', that begins from the human perspective. 'Revelation' for both Calvin and Montaigne is boundless, limitless, spatially, temporally, and numerically. In direct opposition, for both, the human mind is bounded, limited, spatially fixed, temporally linear, and numerically singular. The human mind cannot 'grasp', 'comprehend', 'encompass' – all verbs of circumscription. It should not,

<sup>29</sup> Pouilloux J.-Y., *Montaigne: L'Éveil de la Pensée* (Paris: 1995).

<sup>30</sup> For one of the lengthier engagements with this, see *Essais*, eds. Villey – Saulnier, 598–601.

therefore, seek to make sense, impose order from itself outwards into Creation. Calvin, in Books I and II of the *Institutes*, argues for the spectator of nature, exactly like the reader of Scripture, to eschew interpretation – to abandon that human move to ‘make sense’. Montaigne, even warier of readers and texts, asserts, ‘It is God’s alone, to know himself and to interpret his works’ [‘C’est à Dieu seul de se cognoistre et d’interpreter ses ouvrages’].<sup>31</sup>

For both, the marks are not simple, and bringing to bear, what one assumes one ‘knows’, in order to read them, obstructs what those marks are communicating, whose origins exist outside of human knowledge. The author of nature is not a simple writer, the text is not a simple text, the words, sentences, divisions require attention to discern. Both argue against imposing meaning, order, sense, from the subjectivity of the viewer. But neither stops there.

For both Calvin and Montaigne, ‘reading’, to return to those marks on a page, provides a model for thinking about revelation and human sight. ‘Reading’ allows for the autonomous existence of those marks, which exist quite apart from any human understanding. It also allows for a process which turns ink on a page to words, sentences, text. Without the eye, those ‘marks’ would be invisible. Human beings had been given eyes to see. As Calvin said, humankind had been made a spectator to the theater of God’s glory. As Montaigne asked, did not the great architect put ‘quelque image’ in this world which somehow conveys the creator? ‘Reading’, for both, was a lifelong pursuit, not something one acquires in full as a child, but something one learns over a lifetime of study, as words become familiar through rereading; one’s knowledge of texts, in the plural, deepens; and one begins to hear resonances, to discern connections within and between texts. The relationship of those citations, set apart on the page, to Montaigne’s words is neither obvious nor direct.

Indeed, those citations offer another level of insight into the relationship between reader and nature. Even as Montaigne does not attribute the citations, he sets them apart, acknowledging in the spatial codes of printing a distinct voice. With *marques* and *empreinte*, Calvin and Montaigne link God to the world of authors and texts, invite their readers

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<sup>31</sup> *Essais* 499.



to consider God as author of nature. Both bring to bear their lessons in the complexities of reading – not simply intertextuality, but the lessons of sixteenth-century battles over hermeneutics. Both link those lessons to God's revelation in nature. And both call upon their human readers to respect authorial autonomy, authorial voice.

For both, awareness of one's ignorance *enables* sight. For both, 'seeing' differs from 'curiosity', which Calvin treated with some wariness.<sup>32</sup> It was not 'inquisitiveness' or even that 'desire for knowledge' that 'curiositas' might entail in the sixteenth century, with its attendant eagerness or, at times, volatility.<sup>33</sup> So, too, both held 'seeing' apart from judgment, which Montaigne critiqued so acutely.<sup>34</sup> For both, the relationship between reader and nature was to be governed by humility. One does not begin from a sense of 'knowing', a position of certainty. One begins with the awareness of one's ignorance. One's position with regard to nature is not simply 'not knowing'. Nature and faith are not discrete categories to be housed on different floors of libraries. Nor is 'nature' to be read with the eyes and mind of natural theology. If epistemologically, one eschews all the human-constructed categories, then one begins from a position which might be said to approximate most closely wonder in its preparedness to let the eyes see what is strange, unfamiliar, jarring.<sup>35</sup>

Setting Calvin's and Montaigne's texts next to one another allows us to see each in new ways – to hear resonances that had been muted with their distancing. In Montaigne's work, we hear more fully his thinking about God and divine presence – thinking at odds with modern constructions of him as 'skeptic'. Perhaps the greater surprise is what we learn of Calvin and his insistence upon human eyes as a particular divine gift – so at odds with the modern constructions of him as iconophobic and 'aural' in his orientation. In linking the two, we discover something like wonder – eyes unshaded by human presumption

<sup>32</sup> Kenny N., *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity* 3–4.

<sup>34</sup> On Montaigne's conceptualization of 'judgment', see foremost La Charité R.D., *The Concept of Judgment in Montaigne* (The Hague: 1968). For a contemporary reading of Montaigne's critique of 'judgment', see Levine A., *Sensual Philosophy: Toleration, Skepticism, and Montaigne's Politics of the Self* (Lanham, MD: 2001).

<sup>35</sup> On 'wonder' in early modern Europe, see, foremost, Daston L. – Park K., *Wonders and the Order of Nature* (New York: 1998).

or the human impulse to make sense – in both. And in discovering that quality of wonder in both, we learn something about each, as well as something about ‘wonder’ in the sixteenth century. For Calvin and Montaigne, what we now call ‘wonder’ is the position of true faith and the foundation of such knowledge as human beings can have.

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## QUEL RAPPORT ENTRE UN JEU DE PAUME ET LE ROI DAVID? ANALOGIE ET EXÉGÈSE VISUELLE DANS LE *DAVID ET BETHSABÉE* DE HERRI MET DE BLES

Michel Weemans

Le *Paysage avec David et Bethsabée* [Fig. 1] de Herri met de Bles fut peint au cours des années 1530 où se développe le thème qui, depuis les Bibles illustrées par Hans Sebald Beham et Hans Baldung Grien jusqu'à Rembrandt, va dominer largement l'iconographie de cet épisode biblique: celui de la nudité de Bethsabée, offerte au regard du lecteur-spectateur plus qu'à celui du roi<sup>1</sup> [Fig. 2]. Or, la version de Bles contraste radicalement avec cette tendance; la figure de Bethsabée nue y est réduite à un détail presque indiscernable. Cette disparition n'équivaut pour autant pas à l'évacuation de la dimension sensuelle, mais à son déplacement; le plaisir scopique se trouve déporté vers la sensualité d'un lumineux paysage et de jardins luxuriants. Surface picturale de séduction que vise la pulsion de notre regard, le tableau est aussi un espace dans lequel le spectateur est convoqué à conformer son regard. L'axe de notre regard attiré vers les lointains du séduisant *Paysage avec David et Bethsabée* croise un deuxième axe de regard: celui, latéral à la surface du tableau, du roi David [Fig. 3], qui relie selon une diagonale, le sommet du palais tout en haut à droite, à l'extrémité, tout en bas à gauche, où apparaît la silhouette minuscule et diaphane de Bethsabée nue [Fig. 4]. Au croisement précis de ces deux axes de regard, le labyrinthe nous rappelle que progresser au-delà du sens littéral c'est reconnaître les détours du visuel nécessaires à la saisie du sens spirituel.

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<sup>1</sup> Comme le constate Engamarre M., "La morale ou la beauté? Illustrations des amours de David et Bethsabée (II Samuel 11–12) dans les Bibles des XV<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles", in Schwarzbach B.E. (ed.), *La Bible imprimée dans l'Europe moderne* (Paris: 1999) 447–476; cf. également du même auteur, "David côté jardin: Bethsabée, modèle et anti-modèle littéraire à la Renaissance", *Cité des hommes, cité de Dieu. Travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager, Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 375 (2003) 533–542; Kunoth-Leifels E., *Über die Darstellungen der "Bathsheba im Bade"*. *Studien zur Geschichte des Bildthema. 4 bis 17. Jahrhundert* (Essen: 1962); Adams A.J., *Rembrandt's Bathsheba reading King David's Letter* (Cambridge: 1998); Costley C.L., "David, Bathsheba, and the Penitential Psalms", *Renaissance Quarterly* 57: 4, (2004) 1234–1277.



Fig. 1. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée* (vers 1535–40). Huile sur bois, 46 × 69 cm. Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, copyright The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

L'idée que le tableau 'pose des conditions à sa saisie'<sup>2</sup>, qu'il demande à être appréhendé et interprété selon un point de vue adéquat, sera envisagée ici en termes d'exégèse. Je commencerai donc par demander au lecteur d'accepter une prémisse que j'ai développée ailleurs, à savoir l'hypothèse d'une interprétation des paysages de Bles comme 'exégèses visuelles'. Cette expression désigne les procédés spécifiquement picturaux par lesquels l'œuvre interprète le récit biblique et invite à une conversion du sens littéral vers le sens spirituel. L'idée d'exégèse visuelle appliquée aux peintures, implique une attention particulière aux théories exégétiques contemporaines des œuvres. L'expression renvoie donc aussi à la conception contemporaine de l'exégèse et notamment au modèle érasmien dont deux traits en particulier retiendront notre attention : un fort oculocentrisme – la multiplication des métaphores visuelles, l'opposition constante et fondamentale entre aveuglement charnel et discernement spirituel – et le privilège accordé moins à la typologie *stricto sensu* (l'un des procédés fondamentaux de l'exégèse) qu'à une forme plus large d'analogie visuelle.

<sup>2</sup> Sedelmayr H., "Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft", in *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen I* (Berlin : 1931) 7.



Fig. 2. Hans Baldung Grien, *David et Bethsabée* (1535). Gravure sur bois, *Leien Bibel* (Strasbourg, Wendelin Rihel: 1540). Copyright Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Ainsi, si pour notre regard d'aujourd'hui, éloigné dans le temps, toutes les figures du tableau peuvent paraître anciennes, aux yeux des spectateurs contemporains de Bles, l'écart entre les acteurs en toge du drame biblique et les aristocrates flamands observant une partie de jeu de paume, devait être frappant. Cette disjonction devait servir à indiquer au spectateur que ce paysage avec David et Bethsabée fonctionnait dans un rapport à la fois anachronique et analogique.

‘Quel rapport entre une partie de jeu de paume et un roi adultère?’ pourrait-on se demander, en empruntant à Érasme une formule type de ses recueils d'*Adagiorum*, *Parabolia*, *Similia*. L'analogie, au sens large d'une comparaison entre deux choses en raison d'une ressemblance



Fig. 3. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, David au balcon.

partielle, est omniprésente dans ces recueils, mais c'est dans les textes exégétiques d'Érasme, comme l'a montré Jean-Claude Margolin, qu'apparaît pleinement sa conception de l'analogie.<sup>3</sup> En particulier dans son *Ecclesiastes* (1535) où Érasme réunit sous le même principe général de l'analogie les trois niveaux d'interprétation des Écritures: la typologie, l'allégorie et l'anagogie. Comme l'analogie, la typologie – le rapprochement et l'interprétation de deux événements de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament – implique un double rapport de ressemblance et de différence voire d'opposition (comme le suggèrent les analogies entre Ève et la Vierge Marie, ou encore entre David et le Christ). L'analogie est ensuite assimilée à l'allégorie, puisque tout dans la Bible doit être rapporté au Christ. Enfin quand Érasme affirme encore que 'ce que certains appellent anagogie, je l'appelle analogie': il suggère que le préfixe 'ana' qui signifie aussi 'en amont', indique le processus de remontée vers la lumière du sens spirituel enfoui dans l'Océan des Écritures. L'idée d'exégèse visuelle met l'accent sur le rôle de l'artiste

<sup>3</sup> Margolin J.-C., "L'analogie dans la pensée d'Érasme", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 69 (1978) 24–50.



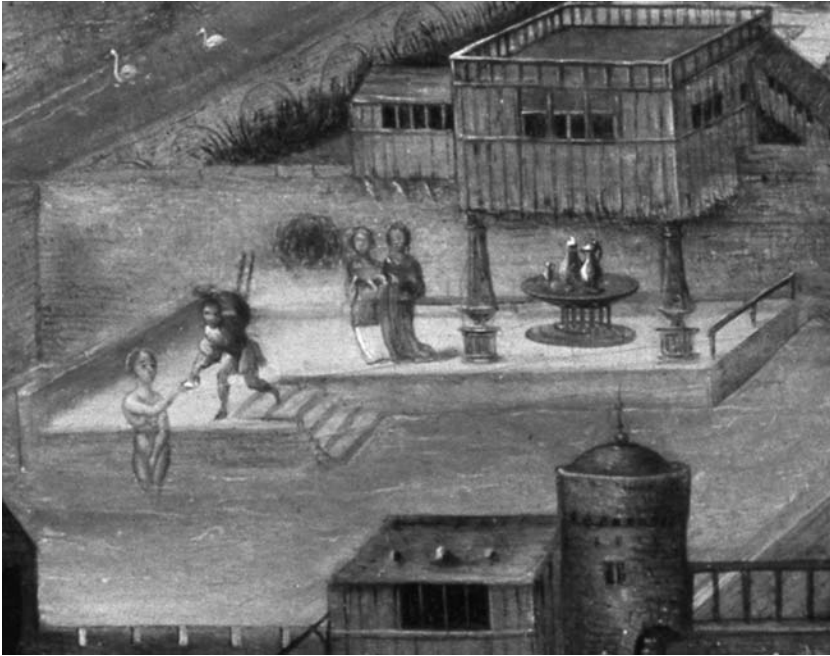


Fig. 4. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, Bethsabée au bain.

non pas comme illustrateur de la Bible mais interprète actif des scènes bibliques et inventeur de procédés visuels spécifiques destinés à enclencher un rapport dynamique à la fois entre l'image et le texte biblique, et entre l'image et le spectateur. L'analogie visuelle, l'un des procédés élaborés par Bles comme stratégie d'exégèse picturale, est aussi liée de manière fondamentale à la logique visuelle qui structure le récit biblique<sup>4</sup> et c'est cette dernière qu'il convient de commencer par rappeler.

La logique chrétienne de la vision – logique du sacrifice et de la conversion – sous-tend les épisodes 11 et 12 du *Livre 2 de Samuel* intitulé *Conduite criminelle de David à l'égard de Bethsabée et d'Urie*. (S. 2, 11)

<sup>4</sup> Sur des exemples similaires chez Bles de l'usage de l'analogie comme variante élargie de la typologie, en relation avec le thème de la vision et en écho avec la conception exégétique érasmienne, je me permets de renvoyer à Weemans M., *Les Paysages exégétiques et anthropomorphes de Henri Bles*, Thèse de doctorat en histoire et théorie de l'art, sous la direction de Hubert Damisch, École des Hautes Études en Science (Paris: 2004); "Herri met de Bles's Way to Calvary. A Silenic Landscape", *Art History* 32: 2 (2009) 307–331.

*La Parabole du pauvre et le repentir de David* (S. 2, 12) qui constituent une imbrication de voyeurisme, de tromperie, d'adultère et de crime, et nous rappellent que l'oeil, organe de la connaissance et du désir, est aussi organe de pouvoir et de transgression.<sup>5</sup> À l'intérieur du vaste récit d'ascension au trône de David, le chapitre XI du *Livre 2 de Samuel* est le moment culminant du pouvoir du roi David qui, pendant qu'il dirige à distance ses généraux poursuivant les fronts, instaure dans son nouveau palais de Jérusalem une vie de cour. Tout au long de ce chapitre, la position supérieure de David est décrite à travers une série d'ordres, d'envois de messagers, de mouvements exécutés autour de lui, et soulignée par l'usage de la terminologie, par la répétition du titre de roi opposés aux messagers et aux serviteurs.<sup>6</sup> L'autorité royale qui ordonne à distance est signifiée dès les premières lignes par la description de la puissance supérieure du *regard* du roi posté au sommet de son palais:

Un soir, David se leva de sa couche; et comme il se promenait sur le toit de la maison royale, il aperçut de là une femme qui se baignait, et qui était très belle de figure.

Ce trait topographique qui inaugure l'épisode possède une fonction très forte dans la logique scopique qui structure le récit: le regard élevé, le regard supérieur du roi lui assure le privilège d'anticiper, de dominer et de régler le destin des autres protagonistes. David, poursuit le récit:

fit demander qui était cette femme, et on lui répondit: N'est-ce pas Bethsabée, fille d'Éliam, femme d'Urie, le Hittite? Et David envoya des gens pour la chercher. Elle vint vers lui et il coucha avec elle.

Bethsabée étant tombée enceinte, la deuxième scène de l'épisode 11 décrit les deux stratagèmes conçus par David pour cacher sa faute. Le roi expédia à Joab, dirigeant les armées israéliennes contre les Philistins, l'ordre de lui envoyer Urie sous prétexte de l'interroger sur l'état du front. David reçut au Palais le mari de Bethsabée qu'il enivra lors d'un repas et poussa à rejoindre sa femme Bethsabée, afin que l'on

<sup>5</sup> Sur l'aveuglement et la logique du sacrifice et de la conversion, cf. Derrida, *Mémoires d'aveugles* (Paris: 1991). Sur le parallèle entre l'aveuglement d'Isaac et l'épisode de David et Bethsabée chez Bles, cf. Weemans M., "Le modèle scopique. Regard et paysage chez Henri Bles", in Toussaint J. (ed.), *Autour de Henri Bles. Actes de colloque* (Namur: 2002) 211-224.

<sup>6</sup> Tout est inversé au chapitre 12 où c'est Dieu qui ordonne et où David subit.

croie à sa paternité. Mais fidèle à la loi d'abstinence imposée aux soldats en mission, et par respect pour l'Arche d'Alliance transférée auparavant par David à Jérusalem, symbole de la présence de Dieu, placée sous une tente provisoire en attente de la construction d'un temple, Urie refusa et campa avec sa garde devant le palais. L'intention de l'auteur du livre de Samuel est clairement d'établir un contraste entre la piété d'Urie et le péché de David, entre le respect de la loi et sa transgression, entre la loyauté aveugle et soumise du serviteur et la perfidie du roi outrepassant ses droits. Le lendemain, David remit alors aux mains d'Urie un message à transmettre à son général Joab, dans lequel il ordonnait à Joab de placer Urie au plus fort du combat et de se retirer afin qu'il soit frappé et qu'il meure. 'David espérait', commente Érasme, 'que cette faute resterait secrète et impunie.'<sup>7</sup>

La logique sacrificielle de la vision qui sous-tend le récit, se déploie, puissante et retorse dans ses effets d'inversion et d'échange, d'opposition et d'équivalence, au service de la démonstration de la supériorité infinie du regard divin. Qu'en est-il d'une part de cette logique dans le récit? Et d'autre part, comment le tableau de Bles traduit-il cette logique selon laquelle, à l'aveuglement d'Urie trompé et sacrifié par David, correspond l'aveuglement passionnel et charnel de David, au regard supérieur et à l'injustice du roi répondent le regard omnivoyant et la justice omnipotente de Dieu?<sup>8</sup>

Le tableau met en œuvre le principe pictural courant chez Bles de *simultanéité* et d'*exhaustivité* qui consiste à rassembler dans un même espace plusieurs moments du récit. C'est à la fois le 'passage du diachronique au synchronique'<sup>9</sup> et la modalité biblique fondamentale de la répétition que traduit la double figure de David dans le tableau qui apparaît d'abord tout en haut de son palais à droite, d'où il espionne Bethsabée nue et son messenger envoyé en secret (Samuel 2, 11, 2-4) – parmi toutes les figures de regardeurs dispersés dans le tableau, seul

<sup>7</sup> Dans son commentaire au Psaume 4 où Érasme appuie sa condamnation de la *concupiscencia oculorum* sur l'exemple de David et Bethsabée, Érasme, *Ennaratio in primum psalmum [...] in psalmum quartum concio*, in Béné Ch. (ed.), *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* 5:2 (Amsterdam: 1969) 215.

<sup>8</sup> La suite fait de David un modèle de repentance: à la punition divine, le sacrifice du premier enfant de David et Bethsabée, répond, en échange de la repentance de David, la naissance d'un deuxième enfant, don de la justice divine et modèle de justice, Salomon.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Damisch H., "La peinture prise au mot" in Schapiro M. (ed.), *Les mots et les images. Sémiotique du langage visuel* (Paris: 2000) 18.

David a par sa position élevée le privilège de cette vue, que nous partageons en tant que spectateurs du tableau.

Dans le tableau comme dans le texte biblique, la position surélevée de David répond à des fonctions précises, à des codes différents, *topographique*, *narratif* (en complément du verset 1, l'installation de David au Palais est le résultat des conquêtes et des faits précédents) et *symbolique* : on peut en effet rattacher ce trait au champ symbolique dans la mesure où le lieu élevé depuis lequel regarde le roi implique le symbolisme biblique ascensionnel et le pouvoir royal. La position surélevée et les accessoires : la couronne d'or et le sceptre d'ivoire<sup>10</sup> correspondent à l'image du pouvoir royal d'institution divine :

le divin conseiller, là-haut dans sa citadelle, commande et se souvenant de son origine, n'a aucune pensée sale ou basse. Il est décoré d'un sceptre d'ivoire, pour la raison qu'il n'ordonne rien qui ne soit droit, et au sommet de celui-ci siège un aigle, comme l'a écrit Homère, parce que le roi s'élevant vers les cieux regarde de haut avec un oeil d'aigle ce qui est sur le sol. Enfin il est ceint d'une couronne d'or. En effet dans les Saintes Lettres, l'or signifie d'ordinaire la sagesse, et le cercle la sagesse parfaite et totalement accomplie. Car ce sont là les qualités propres des rois : d'abord avoir la plus grande sagesse pour ne pas pécher par erreur, ensuite ne vouloir que ce qui est droit, pour ne rien accomplir qui soit oblique ou vicié contre le jugement de leur esprit. Si l'une de ces deux qualités lui fait défaut, tiens-le non pas pour un roi, mais pour un bandit. (Érasme, *Enchiridion*)

Tout le récit de David juxtapose deux extrêmes : le roi élu divinement et l'homme charnel coupable de crime et d'adultère, mais qui sera aussi capable de repentance. L'articulation des épisodes 11 et 12 du Livre 2 de Samuel est le moment de la chute : au sommet de son ascension, le regard d'aigle du roi divin incarnant la justice se renverse en un instant. À la figure élevée du roi au balcon correspond, sur la terrasse au premier plan, la bassesse de David ordonnant à Urie d'être le messager de son secret arrêt de mort [Fig. 5]. Rapporté à la logique visuelle de l'épisode, le peintre réunit les deux moments du récit où la domination scopique, la supériorité du regard royal s'accomplit par le biais du secret et du messager. C'est au croisement précis de cette symétrie, de cette figure dialectique du regard royal, que Bles a placé comme sa figure de résolution, la figure supplémentaire de messager,

<sup>10</sup> Le David au balcon de Herri met de Bles offre un équivalent visuel, bien qu'ambigu, du roi divin décrit par Érasme dans son *Enchiridion Milites Christiani* (1503). *Le Manuel du soldat chrétien*, traduction par A. Festugière (Paris : 1971).



Fig. 5. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, Urie.

de secret et de regard supérieur, le messager envoyé par Dieu, le prophète Nathan<sup>11</sup> [Fig. 6].

<sup>11</sup> Les attitudes de réprobation des deux courtisans qui derrière David se détournent vers le personnage de Nathan, la tenue vestimentaire modeste de celui-ci qui contraste avec tous les personnages de la terrasse, ses pieds nus, son index accusateur pointant vers le ciel et son double geste reliant le terrestre et le céleste sont des indications qui permettent de l'identifier au prophète. Ces caractéristiques, ou une partie d'entre elles se retrouvent dans les représentations de l'admonition de Nathan (dans la Tapisserie d'Ecouen, dans le panneau circulaire de Hans Sebald Beham (Louvre), ou dans les dessins plus tardifs de Ferdinand Bol et de Rembrandt. Il faut souligner le caractère inédit dans le tableau de Bles, de la représentation de ce protagoniste du récit qui,



Fig. 6. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, Nathan.

L'inclusion du prophète dans la représentation de l'épisode et son emplacement au croisement de la double figure du roi, doit ouvrir nos yeux sur le sens spirituel du récit d'une manière comparable au dispositif narratif de la parabole. C'est en effet par le biais d'une parabole associée à un énoncé prophétique que Nathan ouvrit les yeux de David sur son crime aveugle, en lui relatant d'abord, au début de l'épisode 12, l'histoire de la brebis du pauvre : l'histoire de deux hommes qui vivaient dans une même ville, l'un riche possédant un grand nombre de boeufs et de brebis, l'autre pauvre possédant une unique brebis – 'elle grandissait chez lui avec ses enfants; elle mangeait de son pain, buvait dans sa coupe, dormait sur son sein, et il la regardait comme sa fille.' – que le riche sacrifia pour l'offrir en nourriture à un hôte passager. 'À l'écoute de ce récit, la colère de David s'enflamma violemment contre cet homme et il dit à Nathan: 'L'homme qui a fait cela mérite la mort.' Mais David fut arrêté par ces paroles: 'Cet homme-là c'est toi', et reçut la prophétie du châtement divin: 'tu as agi en secret (...) tu as méprisé la parole de Dieu en faisant ce qui est mal à ses yeux (...) tu seras puni en plein soleil, aux yeux de tous'. Prophétie dont la formulation souligne la logique scopique de voilement et de dévoilement, logique d'inversion au service de la supériorité ultime du spirituel: inversion de l'ordre filial – puisque le fils né de l'union charnelle mourra pour cette faute, remplacé après la repentance de David par la naissance d'un deuxième fils, élu par Dieu pour succéder à David: Salomon. L'inversion divine de l'injustice terrestre produit le parangon de justice.<sup>12</sup>

Dans le tableau, au-delà de la figure symétrique de David disposée de part et d'autre de Nathan, c'est à la 'dissymétrie absolue'<sup>13</sup> du regard de Dieu que nous renvoie le geste du prophète, dissymétrie absolue du regard qui voit sans qu'on puisse jamais le voir (il n'y a jamais de face à face, jamais de regard échangé entre Dieu et l'homme

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bien que présent dans les cycles représentant le récit, est généralement absent dans les représentations qui condensent le récit en une seule image privilégiant la nudité de Bethsabée ou la condamnation de Urie par David. Selon Max Engammare, il faut attendre le début du 17<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour qu'apparaisse dans une Bible illustrée l'admonition de Nathan, cf. Engammare M., "La morale ou la beauté?" 472.

<sup>12</sup> Ce qui sous-tend la sentence de Nathan, 'tu as méprisé la parole de Dieu', ce sont les principes de la Loi: 'Tu ne tueras point, tu ne commettras pas d'adultère' (Décalogue, Ex., XX, 13, 14). Pour ne les avoir pas respectés, la loi du talion doit s'exercer contre lui: 'tu as frappé de l'épée Urie, tu as pris sa femme [...] l'épée ne quittera pas ta maison... le fils qui t'es né mourra'.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Derrida, *Mémoires d'aveugles* 125–127.

sinon par l'intermédiaire des messagers, des prophètes), dissymétrie absolue qui permet au regard de Dieu de voir au plus secret de chacun, fût-il roi.

Comme toute parabole, la parabole de la brebis du pauvre est une histoire conçue dès son départ afin d'amener vers une conclusion morale. Comme toute parabole, elle est aussi, selon les termes de Ricoeur, un condensé d'ordinaire et d'extraordinaire. Elle décrit une situation banale au premier abord – deux hommes vivent dans une même ville, l'un est riche et l'autre pauvre, possédant une unique brebis – où surgit de l'extraordinaire – l'homme riche s'approprie brutalement et sacrifie ce bien précieux pour un hôte de passage. Cette dramatisation extravagante pointe le problème herméneutique posé par la parabole: Qu'est-ce qui dans la parabole nous conduit à la regarder comme métaphore d'une autre réalité que ce dont elle parle apparemment? L'hypothèse de Ricoeur est que la parabole est un dispositif d'ouverture dans la structure fermée du récit narratif, ouverture due à la tension entre l'ordinaire de la trame et l'extraordinaire du dénouement. Cette constatation s'appuie sur une comparaison avec deux autres modalités narratives, les proverbes et les dires eschatologiques, définis par les mêmes traits d'intensification par le paradoxe et par l'hyperbole et qui ont pour effet, comme la parabole, d'ouvrir une brèche dans la construction narrative à partir de laquelle le procès métaphorique s'étend à la composition de l'intrigue dans sa totalité.<sup>14</sup>

La parabole de Nathan possède deux particularités qui restent à préciser. La première est qu'elle consiste en une histoire intégrée dans le cours d'un récit et qui se présente comme un condensé du récit qui l'englobe: dès lors les deux hommes dans une même ville, la brebis comparée à l'enfant du pauvre, le sacrifice injuste permettent divers rapprochements avec le récit de David. La deuxième particularité apparaît à la lumière d'une comparaison intertextuelle: en effet deux autres paraboles interviennent dans l'histoire de David – *Samuel 2, 14, 2–20*, et *Rois 1, 20* – qui utilisent la même tactique visant à choquer le destinataire et à appeler son jugement.<sup>15</sup> La deuxième particularité,

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Ricoeur, *L'herméneutique biblique* 147 sq.

<sup>15</sup> Celle de la femme de Tekoa (*Samuel II, 14*) qui lui relate une histoire fabriquée et celle du fils du prophète afin d'obtenir du roi un jugement sur lui-même. Elles relèvent de la catégorie de la 'parabole juridique' (V. Simon) dont la fonction au sein du récit est d'apporter une solution légale à une situation illégale en provoquant une sentence du juge appliquée à lui-même.



trait essentiel de ce type de parabole – et particulièrement signifiant dans le cas d'un récit soumis à une logique visuelle – est donc l'*illusion* : celle qui aveugle le destinataire et garantit l'auto-jugement marquant le point de départ de la série d'inversions et de déplacements dans l'ordre du récit. Pour être plus exact, il faudrait dire que l'illusion aveuglante n'est qu'une étape dans la stratégie de la parabole, laquelle ne tend pas tant à aveugler qu'à voiler, donc à permettre le dévoilement. L'interprétation que la parabole appelle en retour repose, nous l'avons vu, sur les points de comparaison qu'elle propose à celui auquel elle s'adresse comme une condensation de sa situation d'existence : la parabole *ressemble* à celui auquel elle s'adresse, et la parabole, dit Ricoeur, *rassemble* celui à qui elle s'adresse, de telle façon que la 'pointe' de la parabole devienne la 'pointe' de son existence. À la pointe, au sommet de son ascension du récit de David (épisode 11) la parabole est le moment de basculement vers le déclin (épisode 12). Ainsi, précise Ricoeur, 'en rassemblant ses traits individuels en un 'point', la parabole tend à dévoiler les choses. C'est pour cela qu'il faut dire que la parabole 'tend à voiler mais non à aveugler'. Comme les proverbes définis par leur dimension paradoxale et hyperbolique, sa fonction est de désorienter pour réorienter'.<sup>16</sup>

Les effets de la parabole – de parallélisme et d'identification, de réorientation par désorientation – s'adressent à la fois au destinataire spécifique dans le récit et au lecteur du récit. Le dispositif de la parabole constitue conjointement avec la technique narrative de la répétition et le principe biblique de l'intertextualité, ce que Ricoeur décrit comme l'interprétation *dans* le texte : avant d'être l'oeuvre des lecteurs, l'interprétation est le fait du texte, une interprétation dans le texte et par le texte, dont participent la technique de la répétition, les dispositifs textuels de la parabole, des proverbes, de la prophétie, parfois associés à des avertissements adressés au lecteur. Le travail des interprètes – lecteur, exégète, peintre – consiste avant tout à dévoiler ce dynamisme du texte, puis à le prolonger 'en imagination et en sympathie'.<sup>17</sup>

Revenons au tableau dans la ligne de réflexion ouverte par les modalités du récit et les questions de la parabole : la répétition, l'intertextualité, la structure de polarité, les traits d'extravagance et d'ouverture, et la dimension spécifiquement juridique de la parabole. Comment le

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ricoeur P., *L'herméneutique biblique* (Paris: 2000) 147.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Ricoeur P., *Le conflit des interprétations* (Paris: 1969) 417.

tableau, et selon quelles modalités picturales spécifiques qui restent maintenant à définir, interprète-t-il ces qualités caractéristiques de la parabole et son rôle dans la logique visuelle du récit qu'elle contribue à accentuer par des effets de répétition et d'inversion? Comment le tableau restitue-t-il sa fonction d'encadrement et sa valeur d'injonction à tirer du récit littéral un sens moral? Il faut être attentif à l'accent particulier que porte le tableau aux figures de polarité et aux figures d'encadrement. La tension polaire est mise en évidence par la répétition de la figure de David, correspondant aux deux sommets dramatiques de la perfidie et de la prophétie.

Si Bles a développé une interprétation inédite du récit en privilégiant, aux dépens de Bethsabée reléguée à un détail marginal, la figure d'Urie opposée à celle de David<sup>18</sup> – les deux hommes incarnant, au premier plan, le respect de la loi divine et le désir charnel –, ou encore la figure de David opposée à celle de Nathan, c'est pour mieux solliciter notre jugement sur la perfidie du roi et pointer le thème de la supériorité de la justice divine sur la justice terrestre. Ce que met en relief la dialectique picturale du roi élevé et bas, du roi noble et ignoble, et ce que, au-delà de son absurdité de surface, l'épisode de David et Bethsabée a pour fonction de rappeler, c'est la supériorité du divin, et c'est aussi la double dimension fondamentale (charnelle et spirituelle) de cette figure biblique qui amena la tradition exégétique à en faire l'une des préfigures du Christ.

Les figures de la terrasse [Fig. 7] se divisent en deux sous-groupes qui accompagnent et soulignent la tension polaire, par la dimension chromatique (la répétition du rouge et du jaune des vêtements de toutes les figures), mais aussi parce qu'ils incarnent deux courants opposés. Le premier sous-groupe est celui des figures qui encadrent de part et d'autre le couple antithétique de David et Urie. À gauche les fidèles soldats d'Urie, identifiables à leurs tuniques courtes, à leurs musculatures saillantes, et à leurs armes, casques, lances et boucliers. Tous leurs gestes et regards sont pointés vers Urie et nous désignent le moment, intense par ses qualités inhérentes de drame et d'ironie, de la

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<sup>18</sup> Malgré l'ordre de David, Urie et sa garde passèrent deux nuits dehors, à l'entrée de la maison de David. Refus motivé par le respect strict de la loi juive (Deut. 23/10): *'Quand tu iras camper contre les ennemis, tu te garderas de tout mal'*. David lui-même avait proclamé avant cet épisode (Sam. 1, 26/6): *'les femmes ont été interdites, comme toujours quand je pars en campagne'*, ce qui explique la sentence finale de Nathan adressée à David *'Tu as méprisé la parole de Dieu.'*



Fig. 7. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, terrasse.

perfidie. À droite de David les courtisans en toges qui en se détournant vers Nathan orientent notre attention vers le second acte du drame. Une progression narrative conduit ainsi du couple opposant Urie et David jusqu'à Nathan à l'extrême bord du tableau, vers la figure de la parabole.

Un deuxième groupe de figures occupe la terrasse. Il se compose de personnages qui se tiennent légèrement à l'écart de la scène : deux d'entre eux sont en discussion, tournés vers la scène dramatique, deux autres se détournent vers la partie de jeu de paume. À gauche encore, coiffé d'un turban rouge qui le rend plus démonstratif, un personnage s'adresse à nous d'un geste et d'un regard direct et insistant [Fig. 8]. Figure de jonction et figure déictique, il répond symétriquement au prophète.

Il pointe le jeu de paume au cœur de toute la partie gauche du tableau. Et il établit au centre du tableau la jonction entre les deux espaces correspondant aux deux sources textuelles, et entre deux temporalités : celle du récit biblique et celle d'une vie de cour contemporaine qui s'appuie sur le roman de Rabelais publié alors. Il est aussi par le regard qu'il nous adresse à la jonction des deux espaces du tableau et du spectateur. Cette fonction est soulignée par sa position de face qui fait exception au sein d'une série de personnages tous de profil. Meyer Schapiro a bien montré comment ce type de contraste



Fig. 8. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, admoniteur.

entre face et profil soulignait deux modes de relations distincts entre sujet et spectateur et permettait d'accentuer le contraste entre une histoire à laquelle participent les figures de profil, et son interruption emphatique marquée par une figure de face associée au spectateur extérieur par le regard, ou encore, selon une comparaison grammaticale, entre un axe de l'énoncé correspondant à l'histoire et parallèle au plan du tableau et un axe perpendiculaire d'énonciation :

le visage de profil est détaché de l'observateur et appartient, avec le corps en action (ou inerte et sans but), à un espace que les autres profils partagent sur la surface de l'image. Il correspond approximativement à la forme grammaticale de la troisième personne : le pronom 'il' ou 'elle' non spécifié, suivi de la forme verbale correspondante ; au lieu que le visage tourné vers l'extérieur paraît animé d'un regard latent ou potentiel dirigé vers le spectateur, et correspond au rôle du 'je' dans le lan-

gage, associé au ‘tu’ qui en est le complément obligé. Il semble exister autant pour nous que pour soi, dans un espace qui prolonge virtuellement le nôtre<sup>19</sup>.

Figure complexe d’intersection, à la jointure de divers degrés d’espaces et de temporalités, l’admoniteur partage avec Nathan plusieurs points communs qui permettent de les définir tous les deux comme figures extravagantes ou figures d’encadrement. Comme lui, Nathan est à la jonction de récits et de temporalités hétérogènes : narrative et prophétique, récit d’ascension et récit de déclin.<sup>20</sup> Comme lui, qui par son regard ouvre dans la construction spatiale du tableau une brèche vers l’espace du spectateur, le prophète assure une fonction *phatique*, selon la notion de Benveniste désignant l’établissement d’un contact avec l’interlocuteur. Comme lui enfin, Nathan est placé à l’une des extrémités de la terrasse, et assure la fonction d’encadrement qui évoque le fameux précepte d’Alberti concernant ces figures généralement en retrait de l’action et en position de commentateur ou d’admoniteur.

L’importance du rôle de ces deux figures d’encadrement peut être précisée par un parallèle avec un dispositif similaire employé alors dans le théâtre. Ce n’est pas seulement l’aspect quelque peu théâtral, unique chez Bles, de la scène de la terrasse qui invite à ce rapprochement, mais aussi le fait que le tableau de Bles s’inscrit dans un contexte où la figure biblique de David, était alors prétexte, dans le théâtre contemporain des *rederijkers*, à des comparaisons typologiques entre temps biblique et époque contemporaine, en particulier avec la figure de Charles Quint.<sup>21</sup> Le dispositif similaire qui nous intéresse ici

<sup>19</sup> “Face et profil comme forme symbolique”, in Schapiro M. (ed.), *Les Mots et les Images. Sémiotique du langage visuel* (Paris : 2000) 93–123.

<sup>20</sup> Cruciaux dans l’histoire de David puisqu’ils marquent dans le fil général de l’ascension au trône le basculement de l’ascension vers la chute.

<sup>21</sup> L’exégèse a fait de David, en vertu de la qualité messianique liée à son oeuvre et de sa double dimension, terrestre par nature et divine par consécration, une des préfigures du Christ, et c’est pour cette raison qu’il est devenu l’une des figures légitimatrices du concept du roi *gemina persona*, humain par nature et divin par grâce. Au milieu du seizième siècle, de nombreuses pièces de théâtre établissent une comparaison entre David et Charles Quint : celui qui gouverne avec la sagesse de Salomon, l’humilité de Joseph et la droiture de David. Les Victoires militaires de Charles Quint, ses visites et entrées dans les villes flamandes, étaient célébrées par des Pièces et des tableaux vivants où les parallèles bibliques étaient courants. Ces pièces reflètent le contexte de renouveau de l’idéal impérial qualifié par Frances Yates de ‘manifestation tardive du Monarque, le Seigneur potentiel du monde, dans la personne de l’Empereur Charles

est celui que les historiens du théâtre ont nommé phénomène d'encadrement. On en trouve notamment la trace dans plusieurs tableaux et gravures montrant des représentations de scènes de théâtre dévotionnel ou de drames rhétoriques,<sup>22</sup> qui mettent l'accent sur ces personnages au statut particulier.<sup>23</sup> Hummelen a bien décrit comment les personnages de ces petites scènes jouées en prologue, en conclusion et parfois entre les épisodes, se tenaient toujours à la limite de la scène, sur une sorte de prolongement latéral, ou parfois surgissaient du public et se hissaient au-devant de la scène.<sup>24</sup> C'est leur situation à un niveau de réalité distinct de la pièce centrale – peu importe qu'il s'agisse d'un rêve, d'une vision ou d'une fable – qui leur permettait d'échanger leurs vues sur le contenu du drame et de s'adresser directement au public. Cette technique qui visait à attirer l'attention et à produire des changements de perspective sur l'action constituait 'une des structures fondamentales des drames des *rederijkers* à dimension morale et didactique.' Dans le phénomène parallèle des 'tableaux vivants' parfois représentés à l'intérieur des pièces elles-mêmes, Hummelen signale la présence de semblables figures périphériques désignant, avec ou sans texte, les autres acteurs. Les figures d'encadrement ont essentiellement pour fonction d'orienter les spectateurs vers une attention dévotion-

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Quint' qui atteint son summum après la Victoire de Pavie, avec l'espoir que l'Empereur apporte un nouvel âge de paix. Dans les deux pièces de Cornelis Everaert écrites pour célébrer la Victoire de Pavie, l'Empereur est comparé à David ainsi que dans *Tspel vanden Pays* (la Pièce de la Paix) composée par Everaert pour célébrer l'Armistice de Nice et présentée à Gand en 1539. Cf. Waite G., *Reformers on Stage* (Toronto: 2000) 188, 192–193, 198; Kantorowicz E., *Les deux corps du roi* (Paris: 1989); Yates F.A., "Charles Quint et l'idée d'empire", in Jean Jacquot (ed.), *Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint* (Paris: 1960) 57–98.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. notamment Sterck J.F.M., *Van Rederijkerskamer tot muiderkring* (Amsterdam: 1938), et Liebrecht H., *Les chambres de Rhétorique* (Bruxelles: 1948); Ramakers B.A.M., *Spelen en figuren. Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd* (Amsterdam: 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Parfois en costume de fou comme dans *Temperentia* de Bruegel. Dans certaines illustrations ces personnages apparaissent même clairement sur une sorte de scène latérale, un prolongement de la scène centrale, depuis laquelle ils peuvent percevoir ce qui se passe sur la scène centrale tout en adressant au public des gestes qui invitent le public à partager leurs réactions à l'action de la scène centrale.

<sup>24</sup> Lors du Landjuweel de 1561, les Violieren (les rederijkers d'Anvers) ont proposé une pièce sur le thème du jugement, mettant en scène Apollon et Pan, avec un court dialogue d'introduction au cours duquel les personnages de Rhetorica et de Musica soulignent l'incapacité des hommes à accomplir quoi que ce soit sans la grâce divine, et rappellent que le profit personnel (*eyghen bate*) est une désillusion destructive, Cartwright J., "The politics of rhetoric: the 1561 Antwerp Landjuweel", *Comparative Drama* 27 (1993) 54–63.

nelle, de proposer un commentaire moral, de rappeler au public les sources bibliques de la pièce, et parfois de recommander au public de lire attentivement le texte original. Ainsi à la fin d'une représentation d'une Conversion de saint Paul, un personnage vient récapituler le récit pour insister sur la nature spirituelle de la conversion, et engager le public à un changement interne similaire à celui de Paul, en l'amenant à un niveau de perception semblable.<sup>25</sup> Eu égard à la configuration spectaculaire de la terrasse, au décalage anachronique des costumes et de la façade vis-à-vis des scènes du jardin, eu égard à leur emplacement, les figures de Nathan et de l'admoniteur au turban apparaissent comme les équivalents picturaux de ces figures liminaires du théâtre des *rederijkers*.

Quel est alors le sens de ce personnage qui nous interpelle fixement du regard tout en désignant du doigt le jeu de Paume? Quel est le sens de cette figure d'admoniteur, censé (selon le précepte d'Alberti) 'nous avertir qu'il se passe quelque chose d'important', alors qu'à cet endroit, il ne se passe vis-à-vis du récit visiblement rien d'important? Quelle est la fonction de cet admoniteur, sinon en pointant le cœur de cette configuration, d'en désigner la valeur métaphorique?

Il faut préciser que la partie de jeu de paume que désigne l'admoniteur, est elle-même au cœur de toute une série de lieux qui correspondent exactement, comme l'a révélé Luc Serck, à la description par Rabelais de l'Abbaye de Thélème, au chapitre 55 de Gargantua.<sup>26</sup> Tous les sites du jardin décrits par Rabelais sont présents: le verger, le beau jardin de plaisance, le natoire à triple solier, la fontaine magnifique avec les trois grâces, le grand parc à bêtes sauvages, et surtout tous les jeux et les sites: le jeu de paume, le jeu de balle, la fauconnerie, le jeu de tir à l'arc et le labyrinthe, rassemblés en une configuration et qui par leur valeur commune de métaphore visuelle contribuent à amplifier la valeur scopique du récit. Et si parmi tous les lieux des jardins des Thélémites, il manque apparemment le théâtre mentionné par Rabelais, risquons l'hypothèse de son évocation *in absentia* à travers la scène spectaculaire de la terrasse et les figures extravagantes d'encadrement de l'admoniteur et du prophète.

<sup>25</sup> Sur ces dispositifs d'encadrement et leur fonction d'exégèse typologique dans le théâtre religieux cf. Scherb V., "Frame Structure in the Conversion of St Paul", *Comparative Drama* 26 (1992) 124-139.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Serck L., *Henri Bles et la peinture de paysage* 228.

En mettant l'accent sur l'acte de montrer et de regarder qui caractérise cette sélection de lieux et de motifs variés, le tableau déploie une dimension qui n'est pas présente dans le roman : leur valeur commune de métaphore visuelle, d'une manière qui fait écho et contribue à amplifier la valeur scopique du récit biblique. Au coeur de cet ensemble la partie de jeu de paume, qui requiert avant tout des joueurs un regard d'une acuité supérieure, est cernée elle-même de regards lancés de toutes parts, soulignés par les détails et les attitudes des spectateurs qui observent autour et à l'intérieur du terrain. La présence d'un fou en costume<sup>27</sup> n'a ici rien de fortuit [Fig. 9]. En guettant à travers la grille, il *reluque*, selon le verbe qui en moyen néerlandais signifiait l'acte de regarder à travers ses doigts ou du coin de l'oeil avec désir et convoitise. Il introduit ainsi une nouvelle polarité signifiante avec la figure de son maître au balcon dont il incarne en tant que fou le double parodique. Derrière lui s'avancent deux dames de haute lignée, les habitantes de Thélème, décrites par Rabelais, portant '*épervier sur leur poing mignonement engantelé*',<sup>28</sup> détail qui dans le texte renvoie à un idéal de culture de cour mais dont l'image picturale n'est pas sans évoquer la valeur symbolique de vue perçante.

Les jeux disposés à l'avant du tableau amplifient considérablement la thématique du regard. À gauche [Fig. 10], deux hommes de cour observent un jeu de boule – le fameux *Beugelen* néerlandais, très populaire à la Renaissance – dont le principe inspira à Nicolas de Cues son fameux traité '*Du Jeu de Boule*', qui décrit métaphoriquement la vision progressant selon les paliers successifs correspondant aux neuf anneaux concentriques, 'de la confuse ténèbre à la lumière spirituelle', de la vision 'charnelle et réduite' jusqu'au parfait discernement.<sup>29</sup> A ce

<sup>27</sup> Sur la figure du fou et les effets d'interpellation et d'identification du spectateur cf. notamment Vandenbroeck P., *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf. Over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars* (Antwerp: 1987).

<sup>28</sup> Rabelais, *Gargantua* (Paris: 1534) chap. 57, "*Comment estoient reiglez les Thelemites à leur manière de vivre*".

<sup>29</sup> Nicolas de Cues développe dans le *De ludo globi* la conception de la vision progressive du *De visione Dei sive de icona* (1453), de la vision réduite ou imparfaite de l'homme à la vision parfaite, 'du confus au distinct, de la confuse ténèbre à la lumière distincte [...] de la nature corporelle à la nature spirituelle.' Les neuf cercles concentriques du jeu de boule correspondent aux dix degrés de discernement. Les cercles sont les degrés de la vision: 'par les neuf figurations circonférentielles on atteint au centre comme par les neuf accidents on atteint à la substance [...] Nombrer c'est discerner [...] C'est donc pour signifier un plein discernement que j'ai ainsi figuré les choses. [...] par ordres et degrés du moindre au plus élevé, lequel est le Christ', cf. Cues N. de, *De*





Fig. 9. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, fou.

jeu qui donna l'expression '*jouer à boule veüe*' que les dictionnaires du seizième siècle citent comme métaphore de l'acuité visuelle<sup>30</sup> fait écho juste au-dessus les figures de l'archer et de la cible [Fig. 11] qui constituent dans la littérature dévotionnelle ou emblématique la métaphore visuelle la plus répandue du *discernere* chrétien: la capacité à distinguer le bien et le mal dépend de la cible. 'Les archers se choisissent une cible grâce à laquelle ils observent s'ils tirent bien ou mal', ainsi le chrétien doit-il diriger son regard vers le Christ affirme Gerard Zerbolt

*ludo globi* (1463), traduction par M. de Gandillac, in *Lettres aux moines de Tegernsee sur la docte ignorance* (1452-1456). *Du jeu de la boule* (1463) (Paris: 1985).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Huguet E., *Le langage figuré au seizième siècle* (Paris: 1933) 91.



Fig. 10. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, jeu de boule.

van Zutphen dans son *Manuel de la réforme intérieure*.<sup>31</sup> La métaphore du regard chrétien tendu comme une flèche vers la cible du Christ reprise par Rabelais<sup>32</sup>, coïncide avec la notion qui était au cœur, de l'*Enchiridion* (1504), le *scopus*: à la fois le guetteur et la cible, mais aussi, on l'a dit, l'intention droite et la règle exégétique selon laquelle l'interprète des Écritures a pour tâche de découvrir sous le récit historique les desseins essentiels de Dieu. Recueil de conseils sur la manière de bien lire les Écritures, l'*Enchiridion* se présentait, à son lecteur, rappelons-le, comme une 'arme de lumière', 'un fil de Dédale (pour) aisément sortir, comme d'un labyrinthe inextricable, des égarements de ce monde-ci et parvenir à la pure lumière spirituelle.'<sup>33</sup>

La configuration des jeux que Bles dispose au centre de son tableau apparaît comme un réseau de métaphores relatives à la vision ou à la maîtrise visuelle, et dans ce contexte, au centre exact du tableau,

<sup>31</sup> Zerbolt van Zutphen G., *Manuel de réforme intérieure. Tractatus de reformatione virium animae*, traduction par Fr. Legrand Fr. et Y. van Aels (Turnhout: 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Dans l'*Énigme en prophétie*, en conclusion de Gargantua où le partisan de l'Évangile est dit: 'bienheureux de tendre au but, au blanc que Dieu par son cher fils, lui a fixé, sans par ses affections charnelles estres distraict ny diverty'.

<sup>33</sup> Érasme, *Enchiridion* 127.

couronnant l'ensemble des jeux de paume, de boule et de tir à l'arc,<sup>34</sup> le motif du labyrinthe [Fig. 11] – emblème de l'aveuglement et des plaisirs sensuels dans lesquels il est plus facile d'entrer que de sortir, à l'image des figures minuscules et spectrales errant dans son dédale obscur – contribue à suggérer l'appel au discernement et à amplifier l'opposition antithétique entre clairvoyance et aveuglement qui structure le récit de l'injustice de David.<sup>35</sup>

Au coeur de cette configuration de symboles visuels et d'observateurs, la figure la plus insistante – qui opère la jonction entre les deux pôles

<sup>34</sup> Sur la conception du regard comme flèche ayant donné lieu à de nombreuses occurrences littéraires, emblématiques, picturales, à connotations érotiques, cf. notamment Geer Luijten à propos des figures d'archers de Andries Stock, Jacques de Gheyn, David Vinckboons, Daniel Hopfer, etc. in Jongh E. de – Luijten G. (eds.), *Mirror of Everyday Life, Genre Prints in the Netherlands, 1550–1700* (Amsterdam – Ghent: 1997) 129–132.

<sup>35</sup> Walter Gibson, dans son analyse de la version de *David et Bethsabée* de Lucas Gassel, insiste sur le labyrinthe qu'il rapporte au *Théâtre des bons engins* de Guillaume de la Perrière, où il est décrit comme symbole de 'la volupté des plaisirs sensuels dans lesquels il est plus facile d'entrer que de sortir.' Tout en négligeant le jeu de paume, ce parallèle tend à réduire et à orienter exclusivement son interprétation du tableau: 'Les moralistes de cette époque se plaignaient fréquemment de la frivolité et de la corruption de la vie de cour et Gassel a certainement décrit ces aspects de la cour de David avec une insistance qui ne pouvait passer inaperçue. Le labyrinthe fonctionne ainsi peut-être comme un commentaire du récit de l'adultère de David.' La popularité du tableau de Gassel tient selon Gibson, à l'attrait exercé par le tableau sur une noblesse qui y voyait 'une homélie sur les écueils de ses modes de vie.' L'hypothèse de Marian Ainsworth prolonge celle de Gibson et s'appuie sur l'idée de Fritz Lugt selon laquelle le modèle initial est le dessin du Louvre dont s'inspirent les versions de Gassel et de Bles produites en atelier et faisant intervenir plusieurs collaborateurs. Le 'thème populaire de David et Bethsabée' est à nouveau présenté comme le prétexte à une description élaborée des fastes de la vie de cour dans un paysage dominé par le labyrinthe, 'inspiré par les commentaires moralisant [...] dont on trouve des descriptions dans les livres d'emblème contemporains tels que le *Théâtre des bons engins* de Guillaume de la Perrière.' Le risque d'une iconologie isolante, qui consiste à sélectionner de manière exclusive un motif du tableau, en l'occurrence le labyrinthe, est de réduire l'interprétation du tableau à un sens univoque en omettant de prendre en compte nombre de détails décisifs à la saisie et à l'interprétation de l'oeuvre. Le labyrinthe constitue certes un motif important, par sa place centrale dans le tableau, par son caractère inédit dans la peinture flamande, par les échos qu'il suggère en tant que symbole d'aveuglement des passions charnelle avec cette thématique dans le récit biblique, mais il est dépendant d'une configuration qui le lie plastiquement et symboliquement à la série de métaphores visuelles dominées par le Jeu de paume. W. Gibson, *Mirror of the Earth: The World Landscape in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting* (Princeton: 1989); M. Ainsworth, "An Unfinished Landscape Painting Attributed to the Master LC and the Sixteenth-Century Workshop Practice", in Muller N.E. – Rosasco D.J. – Marrow J.H. (eds.), *Herri Met de Bles. Studies and Explorations of the World landscape Tradition* (Turnhout – Princeton: 1998) 117–112.



Fig. 11. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, labyrinthe et tir à l'arc.

du tableau, le récit de David d'un côté et de l'autre la partie de jeu de paume [Fig. 12] – est, nous l'avons dit, le personnage coiffé d'un turban rouge, accoudé au rebord de la terrasse supérieure qui nous interpelle fixement du regard tout en désignant du doigt le jeu de Paume, assurant un lien entre la zone quadrillée de la terrasse et celle du jeu de paume. Sa position à l'avant-plan, le rendu de son détail, le caractère tout à fait inédit de ce motif iconographique invitent à considérer plus en détail le jeu de paume, mais c'est surtout le parallèle avec le texte cité de Rabelais qui mérite toute notre attention.

La partie de jeu de paume peinte par Bles et celle décrite par Rabelais après l'énumération des différents lieux et jeux de l'abbaye de Thélème, appartiennent à un même foisonnement de poèmes religieux, colloques moralisateurs, sonnets et ballets érotiques, emblèmes, enluminures, gravures, tableaux qui se sont emparés de ce jeu. Si le jeu de paume fut une vraie folie au 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, à un point peut-être incomparable avec les pratiques et les spectacles sportifs aujourd'hui, c'est parce qu'à lui seul il rassemblait non seulement les passions actuellement dispersées dans la diversité des sports collectifs, mais aussi la passion pour les jeux de hasard puisque les parties spectaculaires faisaient aussi l'objet de paris parfois énormes.<sup>36</sup> Le jeu de paume réunit

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Luze A. de, *La magnifique histoire du jeu de paume* (Paris: 1933) 48, et Fontaine M.-M., "Le jeu de paume comme modèle des échanges: quelques règles de la sociabilité à la Renaissance", in Thélamon F. (ed.), *Sociabilité, pouvoir et société. Actes du colloque de Rouen* (Rouen: 1987) 143–153.

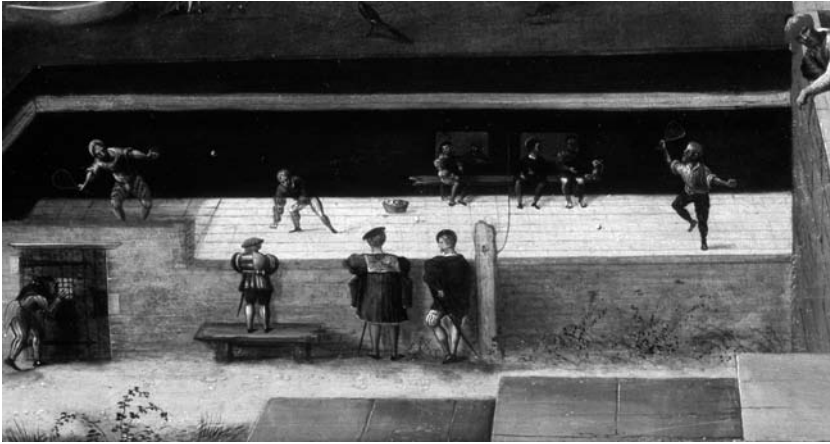


Fig. 12. Herri met de Bles, *David et Bethsabée*. Détail, jeu de paume.

sans exclusion les hommes et les femmes, et toutes les strates sociales : les joueurs les plus célèbres (comme la joueuse belge : Margot de Hainaut) jouent à travers l'Europe, les moines jouent contre les cardinaux, l'équipe des boulangers gagne contre le roi qui le lendemain fait augmenter le prix du pain. Le même François Ier, qui réclamait de jouer contre un moine réputé meilleur joueur du temps, affronta Charles Quint au jeu de Paume lors d'une rencontre à Orléans, et remonta la Loire sur un luxueux navire couvert de satin et spécialement aménagé en jeu de paume.<sup>37</sup> Certains châteaux possèdent parfois quatre jeux de paume<sup>38</sup> et l'on en trouve jusqu'à dix dans certaines rues de Paris qui

<sup>37</sup> En 1539, lorsque 'le roy se mit sur la rivière Loire pour venir à Orléans', les échevins eurent la délicate attention de lui envoyer douze luxueux navires, tous couverts de satin, dont un spécial pour le roi aménagé en jeu de paume : 'et envoyèrent messieurs les Echevins au-devant du roy jusques à Gien, dix ou douze bateaux, tous couverts de satin, où estoient galleries, chambres, cheminées et autres cabarets en mode de navires, et en avait un espécial pour le roy, où y avait quatre chambres, galleries et jeu de paume.' Un jeu de paume avait aussi été ménagé sur 'la Grande François, la plus grande nef qu'on ait vue en France, achevée en 1527, à Saint-Nicolas de Leure. Cette nef, d'ailleurs, échoua dès son lancement.' Au seizième siècle certains édits tenteront d'interdire ou de freiner l'excès de ce jeu. Cf. Luze A. de, *La magnifique histoire du jeu de paume* 42.

<sup>38</sup> Parmi les plus célèbres citons les deux jeux de paume du Louvre construits en 1530, qui font en même temps office de Galerie des marbres et dont Scaino reproduit le plan dans son *Tratatto del Giuco della palla* (1555), ceux du château d'Ecouen construits en 1538 et dessinés et gravés par Androuet du Cerceau, ou encore celui construit par Serlio pour le Cardinal d'Este à Fontainebleau. Sur l'histoire du jeu de paume, cf. notamment Luze A. de, *La magnifique histoire du jeu de paume*; Fontaine M.-M., "Le jeu de paume comme modèle des échanges"; Bath M., "Tennis in the Emblem Books",

en compte plus de deux cents à la fin du seizième siècle. ‘Les Français’, écrit alors Sir Robert Dallington dans son journal de Voyage, ‘naissent une raquette à la main (et) il y a plus de joueurs de paume en France que de buveurs de bière en Angleterre’.

Ce n’est pas seulement sa popularité excessive qui explique les débats passionnés sur ce jeu et l’abondance des formes artistiques qu’il a inspirés alors, ce sont aussi ses caractéristiques très spécifiques. Comme le montre le tableau de Bles le jeu se déroule dans un lieu enclos de murs, une corde sépare le terrain en deux parties qui sont fondamentalement dissymétriques, deux moitiés de terrain où se répartissent différemment des ‘trous’ dans lesquels pénètrent les balles, ou des renflements qui offrent des angles obliques au rebond des balles. C’est en raison de cette dissymétrie du terrain que les joueurs tirent au sort le côté du jeu où ils seront placés. Les lignes qui quadrillent le sol indiquent que le jeu est fondé sur la possibilité de faire des ‘chasses’, c’est-à-dire d’arrêter la balle sur certaines lignes précises du sol et d’obtenir ainsi des points permettant des changements de côté, selon la tactique et les qualités de jeu que les joueurs estiment leur correspondre le mieux. Le dessin anonyme du musée du Louvre [Fig. 13] donne à voir la galerie dans laquelle circulaient et prenaient place les spectateurs le long des deux côtés du terrain afin de mieux observer la variété extraordinaire de coups que permet la configuration très étrange de ce lieu clos. Les spectateurs de chaque côté de la corde sont les arbitres chargés de surveiller si la balle passe au-dessus, ou en dessous de la corde. Ainsi, la caractéristique du jeu de paume – au moyen de la règle des chasses et la circulation possible des spectateurs le long du jeu – est d’imposer la participation des spectateurs pour juger des coups. Dès lors ‘les véritables arbitres du jeu sont les spectateurs constamment sollicités, et se divisant eux-mêmes’.<sup>39</sup>

C’est en vertu de ses caractéristiques très spécifiques – la manière de jouer et les conditions particulières du joueur en raison de la dissymé-

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in Butler L.St.J. – Wordie P.J. (eds.), *The Royal Game* (Falkland: 1989) 44–67; Bondt C. de, *Heeft yemant lust met bal of met recket te spelen? Tennis in Nederland tussen 1500 en 1800* (Amsterdam: 1993); Bondt C. de, *Royal Tennis in Renaissance Italy* (Turnhout: 2006); Morgan R., *Tennis, the Development of the European Ball Game* (Oxford: 1995); Carlier Y. – Bernard-Tambour T. (eds.), *Jeu des rois, roi des jeux. Le jeu de paume en France* (Paris: 2002).

<sup>39</sup> Jeu de hasard, et donc jeu d’argent, le jeu de paume engageait aussi les spectateurs à des paris considérables. cf. Fontaine, “Le jeu de paume comme modèle des échanges”.

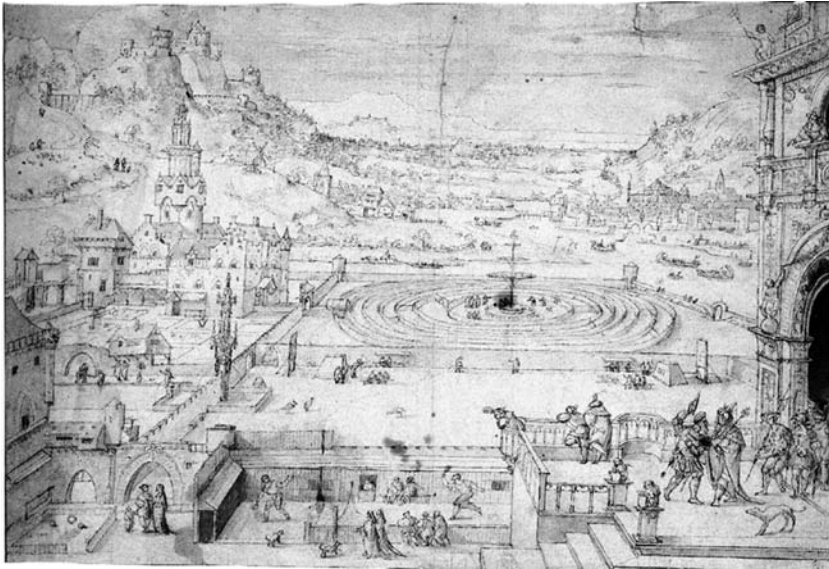


Fig. 13. Anonyme, *David et Bethsabée*. Plume et lavis d'encre de chine, 23.7 × 35 cm. Paris, Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, copyright Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des dessins.

trie du terrain et de la règle hasardeuse des chasses et des avantages, la participation des spectateurs sollicités pour l'arbitrage du jeu et engagés dans des paris – que ce jeu très structuré fut moralisé.<sup>40</sup>

‘*Dat kaetspel ghemoralizeert*’ de Jan van den Berghe, publié à Louvain en 1477<sup>41</sup> est le premier exemple d’une longue série. Il utilise le jeu de paume comme représentation du comportement moral et de la justice. Il met en scène trois joueurs,<sup>42</sup> Jan, Jacob et Pieter, qui incarnent

<sup>40</sup> Parmi les principaux textes littéraires, traités et emblèmes consacrés au jeu de paume aux quinzième et seizième siècles, signalons, par ordre chronologique: Jan van den Berghe, *Dat Kaetspel ghemoralizeert in gheesteliken ende waerliken justicien* (Louvain, Johannes de Westfalia: 1477); Érasme, *De pila Palmaria*, 1522; Guillaume de La Perrière, *Théâtre des bons engins* (Paris, Denis Janot: 1539), Emblèmes n° V et XLI; Barthélémy Anceau, *Picta poësis* (Lyon, M. Bonhomme: 1552), 75; Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Anvers, Christophe Plantin: 1564) 114; Juan Luis Vivès, ‘*Leges ludi*’ in *Exercitio linguae latinae* (Bâle, R. Winter: 1539) 184–196; Mathurin Cordier, *Varii Lusus pueriles* (Paris, M. David: 1555); Scaino, *Trattato del giuoco della Palla*, (Venise, G. Giolito de Ferrari: 1555); Nicolas Guyet, *Pila Palmaria* (Orléans, S. Hotot: 1598).

<sup>41</sup> Jan van den Berghe, *Dat Kaetspel ghemoralizeert* (1477).

<sup>42</sup> Selon le nombre convenu de joueurs, un, deux ou trois dans chaque camp. ‘Au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, le jeu le plus souvent pratiqué par les rois, les gentilshommes, comme

respectivement la grâce divine, la soumission à la justice du Seigneur et le socle de la foi. Face à eux, trois adversaires incarnent les valeurs opposées: *Willekin*, *Reynkin*, et *Desier*, dont les noms signifient respectivement entrave à la justice, ruse perfide et cupidité.<sup>43</sup> Dans ce texte, le jeu de paume et chacune de ses règles – l'emplacement des joueurs, la façon de noter les points, la manière de frapper la balle, le nombre de joueurs et de balles – fait donc l'objet d'une analogie avec les règles du système judiciaire et de la morale religieuse.<sup>44</sup> Quant aux joueurs, écrit Jan van den Berghe (ce que le tableau de Bles suggère encore quelques décennies plus tard) ils rappellent que les hommes sont dirigés par deux lois, tantôt la loi terrestre, tantôt la loi spirituelle.<sup>45</sup>

C'est dans cette lignée que les pédagogues humanistes firent du jeu de paume le motif exemplaire d'énonciation des règles de sociabilité.<sup>46</sup> Le *De Pila Palmaria* d'Érasme<sup>47</sup> publié en 1522, qui met en scène deux groupes de trois joueurs et dont le thème est la formation des enfants à la piété et aux bonnes manières, insiste sur les qualités d'acuité du regard et de modération<sup>48</sup> que doit développer la pratique du jeu. Le récit d'Érasme inspira les règles du jeu de paume de Barthélemy Aneau (1537) qui devinrent un influent modèle de 'fair-play' et de sociabilité, repris par Juan Luis Vivès dans son *Énoncé des lois du jeu de paume* (1539).<sup>49</sup>

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la population citadine (engage) généralement trois joueurs de chaque côté.' Dans les colloques sur le thème du jeu de paume de Érasme et de Mathurin Cordier les écoliers sont trois de chaque côté. Cf. Fontaine, "Le jeu de paume comme modèle" 145–150.

<sup>43</sup> Au folio 38, parmi la centaine d'exemples de justice empruntés à la Bible et décrits au cours des 49 chapitres du livre, figurent ceux de David ayant combattu Goliath, et de Salomon, fils de David et Bethsabée.

<sup>44</sup> La règle des quinze points évoque l'exemple d'Ezéchias dont la vie fut prolongée de quinze ans après s'être repenti; les huit parties dont se compose la balle correspondent à huit règles judiciaires.

<sup>45</sup> 'Hoe men speelt met II kaetsen eer men ute gaet. Men maakt hoogsten twee kaetsen te gelijk (...) Evenzoo moet het volk door twee wetten worden geregeerd: een geestelijke en een wereldlijke wet', Berghe, J. van den, *Dat Kaetspel gheemoralizeert* (1477) II-R.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Fontaine, "Le jeu de paume comme modèle".

<sup>47</sup> Les thèmes du *De Pila palmaria*, publié en mars 1522: les conseils de maintien et de savoir-vivre, la piété de l'enfance, seront développés dans *La Civilité puérile* de 1530.

<sup>48</sup> Jérôme: Que chacun tienne vaillamment son poste. Toi mets-toi derrière moi pour reprendre la balle si elle passe au dessus de moi. Toi surveille ce côté-là, afin de la rattraper si nos adversaires la renvoient'.

Nicolas: Même une mouche ne pourrait passer impunément par ici'. "*La Paume, Jeux enfantins*", in Érasme, *Les Colloques*, traduction par E. Wolf, t.1 (Paris: 1992) 77.

<sup>49</sup> L'utilisation humaniste moralisante du jeu de paume culmine dans l'éloge du



Dans de nombreux cas, les composantes hasardeuses du jeu ont favorisé le parallèle avec les aléas de l'existence : les parois du jeu sont la chair de l'homme, la balle est le cœur de l'homme, les joueurs sont Dieu et Satan, les raquettes sont adversité et prospérité, les arbitres sont les anges, les chasses sont les limites charnelles que franchit souvent la balle, etc. De tels rapprochements sont en adéquation avec le thème populaire de l'ascension et de la chute dont David offre la figure exemplaire.<sup>50</sup> En tant que modèle de succès et de jouissance le jeu de paume induisit une tendance érotique<sup>51</sup> inversant celle moralisante,<sup>52</sup> et c'est selon ces diverses variantes que la vogue des emblèmes s'est quant à elle emparée de ce motif.<sup>53</sup> Les premiers jeux de paume emblématiques – les deux éditions du *Théâtre des Bons Engins* de Guillaume de la Perrière 'Qui prend le bond et laisse la volée' (Paris: 1539) [Fig. 14], 'A chose incertaine l'homme ne se doit fier' (Paris: 1540) et ses versions

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Jeu de paume de Nicolas Guyet qui, citant Horace et Galien, établit un parallèle avec l'Antiquité romaine du 'jeu royal' (*regalis ludus*) qui donne des ailes, procure la santé et adoucit les caractères difficiles.

<sup>50</sup> On peut voir au Musée Thomas-Henry de Cherbourg, signale M.-M. Fontaine, un tableau où 'la scène mythologique de la mort d'Hyacinthe – frappé involontairement par son ami Apollon tandis qu'ils lançaient le disque, selon la fable – fait de lui un joueur de paume tué d'un coup d'esteuf à la tempe, tandis qu'à ses pieds est tombée sa raquette, de fabrication parisienne', Fontaine, "Le jeu de paume comme modèle des échanges" 68.

<sup>51</sup> Pantagruel – décrit comme un bon 'paumier' – partant de Bourges pour Orléans où il trouve 'force rustres d'esholiers qui lui firent grande chère à sa venue [...] en peu de temps apprit avec eux à jouer à la paulme si bien qu'il en était maîtres [...] (et) fist le blason et devise des licenciés en la dicte université, disant: Un esteuf en la braguette/ En la main une raquette/ Une loi en la cornette/ Une basse danse au talon/ Voy vous là passé coquillon'.

<sup>52</sup> Le jeu comme modèle de succès de jouissance, l'association à d'autres jeux de hasard dans un même bâtiment dénommé 'tripot' – terme qui prendra progressivement une connotation négative – l'envoi du projectile dans les 'grilles', les 'lunes' et toutes sortes de trous, a aussi induit une tendance érotique qui inverse au cours du seizième siècle le thème moralisant du jeu de paume. La fameuse devise que compose Pantagruel, l'un des meilleurs 'paumiers' de son temps, sera suivie d'épigrammes (Mathurin Cordier, épigramme n° VIII qui établit une comparaison entre l'amour et les points comptés au jeu de paume), de chansons bachiques (Le Houx), de ballets érotiques dans lesquels les danseurs dansent en costume de joueurs de paume, et de 'Sonnet en forme d'énigme' (Forbet) qui suggère l'influence de l'usage énigmatique de Rabelais.

<sup>53</sup> Les deux recueils de La Perrière et de Barthélémy Aneau, fournissent cinq représentations de Jeu de Paume, dans les deux éditions parisiennes de 1539 et dans les trois éditions lyonnaises de 1545 et 1552, qui font varier à la fois les figures et les textes. Le jeu de paume enluminé du Livre d'Heures de la *Bodleian Library*, montrant non plus deux équipes de trois mais seulement deux joueurs annonce le modèle de ses représentations gravées dans les recueils d'emblème qui prolongeront jusqu'au dix-septième siècle l'utilisation symbolique du jeu de paume.



Fig. 14. Guillaume de la Perrière, *Le jeu de paume*. Gravure sur bois, illustration pour *Le théâtre des bons engins* (Paris, Denis Janot: 1539) Emblème V.

néerlandaises et anglaises – sont aussi dominés par le sens des aléas de l'existence et de l'opportunité manquée; ceux de Barthélemy Aneau (*Picta Poesis*, Lyon: 1552, fol. 75r 'Grand et vain labeur') [Fig. 15] et de Johannes Sambucus (*Emblemata*, Anvers: 1564, 'Tijd verlies, Totten Ketsbal')<sup>54</sup> [Fig. 16] moralisent sur le temps perdu et les passions déréglées,<sup>55</sup> leçon que Roemer Visscher condensera plus tard dans le rébus

<sup>54</sup> Jongh – Luijten (eds.), *Mirror in Everyday Life* 105.

<sup>55</sup> Les légendes rappellent les expressions techniques du jeu de paume qui sont alors passées dans le langage courant: 'prendre la balle au bond', 'Qui va à la chasse perd sa place', 'épater la galerie' ou 'avoir l'avantage'.

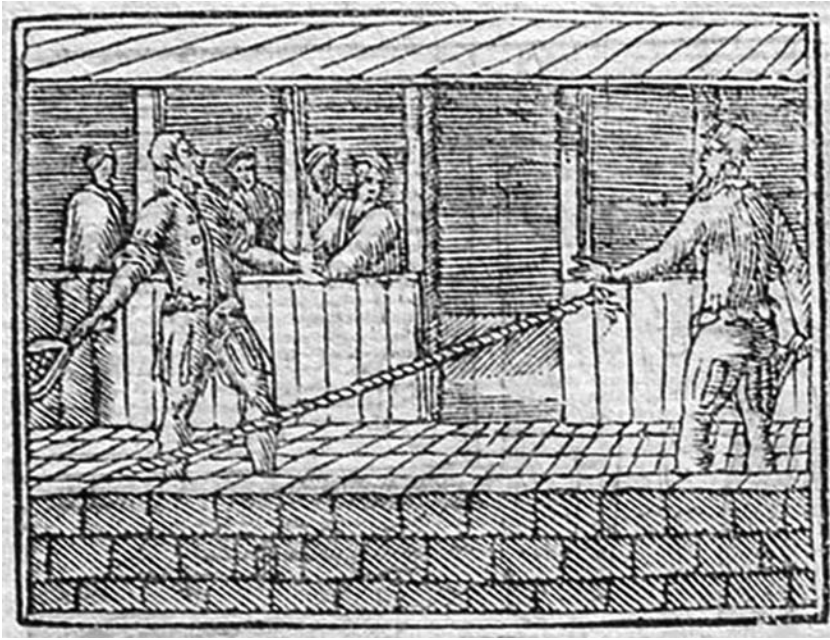


Fig. 15. *Le jeu de paume*. Gravure sur bois, illustration pour Barthélemy Aneau, *Picta Poesis* (Lyon, M. Bonhomme: 1552).

visuel d'une raquette fugace surgissant d'un nuage: '*Ten vangt geen vis*' (Qui n'attrape aucun poisson).<sup>56</sup> Parmi la variété de ses usages, l'une des constantes du jeu de paume dans la littérature humaniste et chrétienne, dans les livres d'emblèmes, demeure sa valeur de métaphore visuelle.<sup>57</sup> 'Le jeu de paume entre tous les jeux, le corps de l'homme exerce, et l'esprit et les yeux' (Barthélemy Aneau).

Le jeu de paume de Bles s'inscrit dans cette longue série de jeux de paume suscitant des analogies avec la justice, les aléas de l'existence, ou la vision. Ces données sont aussi présentes dans la partie de jeu de paume décrite par Rabelais à la suite de l'énumération des

<sup>56</sup> Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepopen*, Fig. 62, (Den Haag: 1614), accompagné d'une *subscriptio* moralisante qui identifie *tijdkortinghe* (passe-temps) à *tijdverlies* (perte de temps).

<sup>57</sup> Qu'on l'entende à la façon purement optique de Descartes quand il utilise la métaphore du jeu de paume dans sa *Dioptrique*, ou à la façon moralisante chrétienne de Jan van den Bergh, ou de Nicolas Guyet, influencé par Érasme et Forbet, dont la description du dispositif du jeu souligne encore la dominante visuelle – 'la fenêtre qui mange toute la paroi, le *scopus*, le but, et le *spectator* qui juge en cas de doute'.



Fig. 16. *Le jeu de paume*. Gravure sur bois, illustration pour Johannes Sambucus, *Emblemata* (Anvers, Christophe Plantin: 1564).

divers lieux de Thélème repris par le tableau de Bles, dans un chapitre de conclusion intitulé '*Enigme en prophétie*'. Il s'agit de la description d'un texte parfaitement obscur et ambivalent, gravé sur la lame d'une épée, attribut allégorique de la Justice, trouvée 'aux fondements' de l'Abbaye et lue par le héros éponyme.<sup>58</sup> Il y est question des allers et

<sup>58</sup> Dans les éditions de 1534, 1535 et 1537, le titre est '*Enigme trouvée es fondemens de l'abbaye des Thelemites*.' Dans la description d'une partie de jeu de paume qui conclut *Gargantua*, Rabelais développe les thèmes de la justice et de l'adresse au lecteur. A cette partie de jeu de paume fait pendant le chapitre 54 introduisant la description de l'Abbaye de Thélème, sous la forme d'un premier 'monument gravé' intitulé: 'Inscription mise sur la grande porte de Thélème'. Il s'agit de la liste des élus appelés dans ce lieu utopique, une élite de gens 'libres', au sens humaniste de gens instruits, mais aussi 'libérés de la servitude qui pousse à entreprendre toujours choses défendues et à

venues du corps d'une machine ronde, de déluge d'eau qui trempe et qui inonde, de débats entre amis et proches parents, de mêlées et discordes, d'hommes sans foi et gens de vérité, de combat, de défaite, de long exercice, de noise et débat, de mêlée où chacun à son tour doit aller haut et puis faire retour, où de leurs sujets les nobles sont assaillis, de ciel de bruit et de terre de pas, de repos, de juge, de persécutions, de retrait, de démunis et d'élus joyeusement refaits.

La lecture de l'énigme est suivie d'un dialogue conclusif entre Gargantua et un moine qui lui demande 'ce qu'il pense être par cette énigme désigné et signifié'. Gargantua répond dans un soupir mélancolique que le joueur décrit par l'énigme n'est autre que le partisan de l'évangile toujours persécuté, mais 'bienheureux de tendre au but, au blanc que Dieu, par son cher fils, lui a fixé d'avance, sans par ses affections charnelles estre distrait ny diverty'. L'énigme n'est autre, affirme Gargantua, que l'accomplissement de la vérité divine.

Pour ma part, répond le moine, 'je n'y pense autre sens enclous qu'une description du jeu de paume soubz d'obscures paroles': 'la machine ronde' n'est pas une métaphore de la terre mais la pelote ou l'esteuf, le mouvement qui monte et qui descend n'est pas celui de la justice mais celui de la balle, les 'nerfs et boyaux de bêtes innocentes' désignent simplement les raquettes 'faictes de boyaux de moutons ou de chèvres', 'les suborneurs de gens' ne sont pas les juges qui persécutent mais les arbitres du jeu, les eaux qui trempent et qui inondent, ne sont pas le déluge inondant la terre pour la purifier mais la sueur qui trempe les joueurs, 'l'âpre chaleur d'une grande flamme' qui clôt l'énigme n'évoque aucun enfer mais est le grand feu clair devant lequel 'volontiers bancquete l'on, mais plus joyeusement ceulx qui ont gainné.'

L'*'Énigme en prophétie'* est le pendant symétrique des '*Fanfreluches anti-dotées*': le prologue du roman où l'auteur s'adresse au lecteur sur la manière dont il convient de le lire, sur son interprétation littérale ou allégorique.<sup>59</sup> Rabelais, reprenant une fameuse image érasmiennne, y

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convoiter ce qui nous est dénié', et 'partisans de l'évangile'. La liste se poursuit par les exclus de Thélème: 'mangeurs du populaire, clercs, scribes et pharisiens, juges anciens qui, ainsi que des chiens, condamnent les bons paroissiens', diatribe contre la justice que E. Michel met en parallèle avec l'*'Epître au roi'* (1539) de Clément Marot, qui fait le procès de la justice.

<sup>59</sup> Sous le nom d'*Alcofribas*, l'anagramme abrégée de François Rabelais. '*A quel propos, en voustre advis, tend ce prelude et coup d'essay*': l'expression venue du jeu de paume souligne le parallèle entre le prologue et la partie de jeu de paume de l'*Énigme en prophétie*.

compare son livre à un Silène: en dépit du titre annonçant *folastreries joyeuses* il n'est pas ce qu'il paraît et contient un *altior sensus*.<sup>60</sup> Comme le Silène socratique, et ajoute Rabelais, à l'imitation du chien de Platon: gourmand et patient comme ce dernier, il revient au lecteur de savoir 'fleurer, sentir et estimer [...] avant de 'rompre l'os et sugcer la substantifique moelle', à savoir le sens allégorique.<sup>61</sup>

L'image du Silène<sup>62</sup> et celle de l'os médullaire du prologue, comme la partie de jeu de paume de la conclusion, sont, dit Rabelais, des 'coup d'essays': l'auteur utilise ici une expression venue du jeu de paume, pour s'adresser au lecteur. Le jeu de paume peint par Bles est un semblable 'coup d'essay', une tentative consistant à prévenir l'accusation de *voluptas oculorum* et à exhorter le spectateur à interpréter avec discernement.

Le tableau de Bles propose une analogie qui fonctionne à plusieurs niveaux. Il n'est sans doute pas fortuit que l'espace quadrillé du terrain du jeu de paume correspondant à des zones stratégiques dans le déroulement du jeu, offre un écho visuel à l'espace quadrillé de la terrasse où sont rigoureusement disposés les acteurs du drame biblique. L'analogie formelle entre les deux sols doit favoriser la mise en relation entre les deux parties du tableau et aboutir, au-delà de la ressemblance de surface, à l'élaboration d'un *altior sensus*. Autrement dit, l'analogie entre le jeu de paume et la représentation du drame biblique correspond à un procédé exégétique pictural qui pointe en direction du sens

<sup>60</sup> Sur ces deux moments clés du roman qui ont fait l'objet de nombreuses études, cf. notamment Gray F., "Ambiguity and Point of view in the Prologue to Gargantua", *Romantic review* 56 (1965) 12–21; Tripet A., "Le prologue de Gargantua: problèmes d'interprétation", *Études de Lettres. Revue de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Lausanne* 2 (1984) 135; Duval E.M., "Interpretation and the 'Doctrine absconce' of Rabelais's prologue to Gargantua", *Études Rabelaisiennes* 18 (Geneva: 1985) 1–17; Defaux G., "D'un problème l'autre: herméneutique de l' *altior sensus* et captatio lectoris dans le prologue de Gargantua", *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 2 (Paris: 1985) 195–216; Bauschatz, C.-M., "Une description du jeu de paulme soulz obscures parolles": The portrayal of reading in Pantagruel and Gargantua", *Études Rabelaisiennes* 22 (Geneva: 1998) 57–76.

<sup>61</sup> Sur les liens entre l'herméneutique et la notion de caritas dans le Gargantua de Rabelais, cf Quint D., *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: 1983) 167–206; cf également Screech M.A., *L'évangélisme de Rabelais. Aspects de la satire religieuse au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Geneva: 1959).

<sup>62</sup> Sur cette analogie commune à Érasme, Rabelais et Bles, cf. Weemans, "Hermet de Bles's Way to Calvary".

spirituel: celui de la supériorité ultime de la vision spirituelle sur la vision terrestre, de la justice divine sur la justice terrestre. J'aimerais aussi suggérer que, comme chez Rabelais qui utilise le jeu de paume comme analogie du processus de lecture et d'interprétation, dans le tableau de Bles, le jeu de paume est une analogie de la relation ludique et productive qui doit s'instaurer entre l'œuvre et le spectateur.<sup>63</sup> L'usage de motifs communs chez Érasme, chez Rabelais et chez Bles, tels que la figure du Silène ou ici le motif du jeu de paume, renvoie à la même "crise de l'interprétation" qui caractérise le seizième siècle.

Cette analogie entre l'interprétation et la notion de jeu trouve sa formulation théorique contemporaine chez Gadamer lorsqu'il compare le caractère essentiellement herméneutique de l'œuvre d'art à un jeu décrit comme un espace délimité par quatre parois dont la quatrième est une fenêtre transparente, une ouverture correspondant à la destination esthétique, spectaculaire et herméneutique de l'œuvre d'art.<sup>64</sup>

La métaphore scopique du jeu de paume chez Bles nous oblige à penser la représentation comme le lieu de cette opération de conversion qui transforme l'œuvre en événement herméneutique. On peut ajouter qu'à la 'prééminence méthodologique' du spectateur (puisque le jeu est tourné vers lui et que cette ouverture contribue à la clôture ou à l'accomplissement du jeu comme tel)<sup>65</sup> s'ajoute la prédominance scopique qui caractérise le *Weltlandschaft*. La vue distante caractéristique des paysages de Bles est ici associée à une structure topologique complexe où les divers lieux sont marqués par des murs et des dénivellations qui permettent au spectateur, bien que son point de vue soit plus bas que celui de David, de voir des zones qui échappent au regard royal. Le paysage ludique et distant de Bles nous oblige ainsi à questionner la prééminence du spectateur, la situation de celui qui regarde

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Bauschatz, "Une description" (1998), cite Montaigne reprenant cinquante ans plus tard cette métaphore: 'La parole est à moitié à celui qui l'écoute. Cetuy-cy se doit preparer à la recevoir selon le branle qu'elle prend. Comme entre-ceux qui jouent à la paume, celuy qui soustient se desmarche et s'apreste selon qu'il voit remuer celuy qui luy jette le coup et selon la forme du coup.', in *Essais* 3, 12, 1066, b. Sur l'interprétation allégorique et sur la dimension morale de l'herméneutique rabelaisienne cf. Duval E.M. "Interprétation" (1985); Defaux, "D'un problème l'autre" (1985); Bauschatz C.M., "Montaigne's Conception of Reading in the Context of Renaissance Poetics and Modern Criticism", in Suleiman S.R. (ed.), *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton: 1980) 264-291.

<sup>64</sup> Gadamer H.G., *Vérité et méthode* (Paris: 1976) 27-28.

<sup>65</sup> Gadamer H.G., *Vérité et méthode* 34-35.

depuis un point de vue distant et supérieur auquel doit correspondre un «altior sensus». Regard quasi théologique vers une vérité toujours inaccessible, sinon par le biais de détours, d'analogies.

Je voudrais, en guise d'épilogue, évoquer un phénomène unique concernant ce tableau : en effet, au sein du vaste corpus pictural attribué à Bles, le *Paysage avec David et Bethsabée* est le seul à avoir généré une série importante de copies. Cet ensemble d'une douzaine d'œuvres inclut une réplique exacte du tableau, un dessin à l'encre, trois versions peintes attribuées à Lucas Gassel ainsi que six autres anonymes.<sup>66</sup> La comparaison de ces copies fait apparaître des différences de qualité et de fonction qui renvoient à la complexité acquise par ce phénomène à l'époque de Bles. La copie n'est alors nullement une nouveauté et la série de David et Bethsabée s'inscrit dans une tradition déjà longue qui a vu se développer et se diversifier une pratique qui recoupe plusieurs

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<sup>66</sup> La classification des diverses copies de David et Bethsabée ci-dessous se base notamment sur les descriptions de Morgan (1980), Luc Serck (1990), et C. de Bondt (2006). Les désignations renvoient au Musée, à la collection actuelle ou à l'ancienne collection dans les cas de localisation inconnue.

– 1 : Henri Bles, version Boston, Histoire de David et Bethsabée, huile sur bois, 46 × 69 cm., Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, inv. P25W40.

– 2 : Henri Bles : version Fleming, Histoire de David et Bethsabée, huile sur bois, 51 × 57 cm., coll. privée anglaise.

– 3 : Lucas Gassel : version Wadsworth, huile sur bois, 45,5 × 68 cm., Hartford, The Wadsworth Atheneum, Acc. n° 1956.618.

– 4 : Lucas Gassel : version De Jonkheere, huile sur bois, 70 × 100 cm., monogrammé LG et daté 1540, (G. De Jonkheere, *Le paysage dans la peinture flamande*, éd. De Jonkheere, 1996, p. 221).

– 5 : Lucas Gassel : version Palmela, huile sur bois, 33 × 45 cm., Ancienne collection Duc de Palmela, Vente Sotheby 1975, loc. actuelle inconnue.

– 6 : Anonyme, dessin, Louvre, plume et lavis encre de chine, 23,7 × 35 cm., Paris, Louvre, Cabinet Arts Graphiques, n° 19.202.

– 7 : Anonyme, version Marylbone, d'après Lucas Gassel, huile sur bois, 60 × 52,5 cm., inscription sur le mur de la terrasse : DAVID CUM BERSABEA ADUITERTO COMMISE URIAM AB HOSTIBUS OCCIDENTUM IN PRAELIUM MITTTIT ANNO 15.4 (troisième chiffre illisible) (David alors qu'il avait commis l'adultère avec Bethsabée envoie Urie pour être tué par les ennemis).

– 8 : Anonyme, version Weerth, d'après Lucas Gassel, huile sur bois, 71 × 91 cm., loc. actuelle inconnue, Vente Cologne, 1913.

– 9 : Anonyme, version Aberdare, huile sur bois, monogrammé et signé A.R. 1559, d'après la version Restelli de Lucas Gassel.

– 10 : Anonyme, version Kende, huile sur bois, 34 × 55 cm., Localisation actuelle inconnue, Vente N.Y., Kende Galleries, 1951.

– 11 : Anonyme, version Charpentier, huile sur bois, 57 × 70 cm., loc. actuelle inconnue, Vente Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 7/6/1955, n° 40, pl. XII.

– 12 : Anonyme, version Chicago, huile sur bois, (18 × 26 inch.), Racket Club of Chicago, (Tableau volé en 1979, cité par R. Morgan, 1980, note p. 243).



phénomènes distincts.<sup>67</sup> Il n'est pas question d'envisager ici en détail ce phénomène complexe et passionnant dont Bles fut l'un des acteurs majeurs. La question que je pose est celle-ci : Pourquoi le David et Bethsabée de Bles est-il le seul tableau de ce peintre à avoir suscité une telle série de copies ? Et derrière cette question il y en a une autre : que nous dit ce phénomène sur le tableau lui-même ? Répondre à ces questions, et déjà les poser, c'est proposer l'hypothèse d'un ordre dans lequel le tableau de Bles occupe la position de modèle vis-à-vis des autres versions connues du tableau. Ceci va à l'encontre, j'y reviendrai, d'autres interprétations qui postulent au contraire l'antériorité des versions de Gassel ou du dessin du Louvre. Mais c'est précisément parce que ces hypothèses me semblent contradictoires avec l'analyse qui précède qu'il me semble opportun de préciser ici, par comparaison ou par contraste avec cet ensemble de copies, la spécificité de l'exégèse visuelle de Bles.

Les études récentes consacrées au phénomène de la copie dans la peinture des Pays-Bas des 15<sup>e</sup> et 16<sup>e</sup> siècles, ont insisté sur la nécessité de prendre en compte un large éventail de pratiques allant de la production massive (et parfois de faible qualité) à une forme artistique raffinée de variation.<sup>68</sup> L'accent a été mis sur deux phénomènes qui

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<sup>67</sup> La production énorme et hétérogène de copies dans la peinture flamande des quinzième et seizième siècles a depuis plusieurs décennies suscité l'intérêt de l'histoire de l'art pour ce phénomène dont on mesure l'ampleur quand on considère qu'il concerne un tiers de la production picturale et que des peintres d'une importance telle que Hugo van der Goes ne sont connus pour la majeure part de leur œuvre qu'à travers de multiples copies qui datent pour la plupart du seizième siècle. A la prise de conscience de l'importance de ce phénomène par l'histoire de l'art ne sont sans doute pas étrangers, à la fois l'intérêt renouvelé par l'esthétique, et spécialement de la tradition analytique, de Nelson Goodman à Arthur Danto, pour le concept de copie, mais aussi certainement l'évolution de l'art lui-même qui depuis longtemps n'a eu de cesse d'explorer les ressources infinies de la sérialité et de bousculer les notions de copie et d'original.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. notamment Dijkstra J., *Origineel en Kópíe. Een onderzoek naar de navolging van de Meester van Flemalle en Rogier van der Weyden*, Amsterdam, 1990; Marian Ainsworth, *Gerard David, Purity of vision in an age of transition* (New York: 1998); Hélène Mund, *Copie et traditionalisme dans la peinture flamande des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, thèse de doctorat inédite, Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-La-Neuve: 1991–1992); Hélène Mund, "La copie", in Patoul B. de – Schoute R. van (eds.), *Les primitifs flamands et leur temps* (Bruxelles: 1994) 620–632; Hélène Mund, "La copie chez les primitifs flamands et Dirk Bouts", in Smeyers M. (ed.), *Dirk Bouts, een Vlaams primitief te Leuven* (Leuven: 1998) 231–246; Jacobs, L.F., "The marketing and standardization of South Netherlandish carved altarpieces: Limits on the role of the patron", *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989) 207–229; Muller J., "Measures of Authenticity: the Detection of Copies in the Early Literature on Connoisseurship", *Studies in the History of Art* 20 (1989) 141–149; Peter

concernent précisément notre série. Le premier est une pratique de la *reprise*, qu'il faut entendre au sens de la réutilisation de motifs précis dans diverses compositions, mais aussi au sens de copies exactes ou de copies libres exécutées à partir d'un même modèle.<sup>69</sup> Ces deux pratiques déjà utilisées par les 'peintres-entrepreneurs' brugeois de la deuxième moitié du 15<sup>e</sup> siècle comme Gerard David<sup>70</sup> seront largement développées par les peintres anversois du siècle suivant.<sup>71</sup> Lié à la pratique de la copie, un phénomène nouveau apparaît à Anvers, qui connaît une vogue rapide et dont Herri met de Bles est l'un des acteurs principaux : celui de la *collaboration de spécialistes*.<sup>72</sup> Nombre de ses tableaux résultent en effet d'une collaboration avec des peintres comme Pieter Coecke van Aelst – lui-même à la tête de l'un des principaux 'ateliers de reproduction' d'Anvers – le Monogrammiste de Brunswick, Pieter Aertsen, Lambert van Noort et le Maître de Paul et Barnabé, ces deux derniers étant identifiés comme les collaborateurs les plus réguliers de Bles. C'est donc dans ce contexte qu'il faut envisager le *David et Bethsabée* et la constellation d'exemplaires que l'on peut rapporter aux modalités de la *réplique*, de la *copie libre*, de la *variation* et de la *collaboration de spécialistes*.

Véronique Bücken a ainsi montré de manière convaincante que le *Paysage avec David et Bethsabée* de Boston résulte d'une collaboration entre Bles et le Maître de Paul et Barnabé.<sup>73</sup> C'est à ce dernier que revient le groupe des figures de la terrasse ainsi que l'architecture devant laquelle il est placé. Ce groupe :

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van den Brink, "Le pourquoi et le comment de l'exécution de copies aux Pays-Bas aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles", in Allard D. et al. (eds.), *L'Entreprise Brueghel* (Bruxelles – Gand – Amsterdam : 2001) 12–44.

<sup>69</sup> Inaugurée par les multiples versions par Gerard David de la *Fuite en Egypte* et de la *Vierge à la soupe au lait*, cf. Mund, "La copie", 1994.

<sup>70</sup> Dont les tableaux sont repris par Adrien Isenbrant et Ambrosius Benson, ou par des peintres anonymes.

<sup>71</sup> P. van den Brink a étudié les centaines de triptyques et de panneaux de dévotion sortant des ateliers de peintres généralement restés anonymes, désignés par le nom collectif de *maniéristes* anversois. Sur l'organisation des ateliers à Anvers pendant le premier quart du seizième siècle, cf. Brink P. van den, *Ondertekening en andere technische aspecten bij schilderijen van de Antwerpse Maniëristen 1550–1525*, thèse de doctorat, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen; Velde C. van de, "Painters and Patrons in Antwerp in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Vlieghe H. – Balis A. – Velde C. van de (eds.), *Concept, Design & Execution in Flemish Painting (1550–1700)* (Turnhout : 2000).

<sup>72</sup> Sur cette pratique cf. Brink P. van den, "Le pourquoi et le comment" 12–44.

<sup>73</sup> "La guérison du paralytique de Capharnaüm attribué au Maître de Paul et Barnabé. Une acquisition récente des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique", in Toussaint J. (ed.), *Actes du Colloque "Autour de Henri Bles"* (Namur : 2002) 249–264.

se distingue du reste du tableau tant par ses coloris vifs et contrastés que par le pouvoir très couvrant de la matière et par les mouvements qui animent les personnages.<sup>74</sup>

Ainsi les vêtements antiquisants au tombé très fluide des soldats et des courtisans du roi, les jaunes et les rouges vifs, les mouvements des bras, les mines graves, les poses très théâtrales s'opposent totalement aux costumes gris et bleus des promeneurs et des joueurs de paume. On pourrait ajouter, pour aller dans son sens, que les attitudes plus raides des spectateurs du jeu de paume et du jeu de boule, trapus et aux jambes rondes et larges, ainsi que les dames engoncées dans des robes épaisses, aux mains à peine esquissées, contrastent avec les corps aux musculatures sinueuses et les mains effilées des soldats, du roi et des courtisans. Il résulte donc que :

deux mains différentes ont participé à la réalisation de cette oeuvre. Henri Bles s'est chargé du paysage et a confié à un spécialiste des figures, le Maître de Paul et Barnabé, le soin de réaliser Urie et sa cour devant le palais.<sup>75</sup>

Encore faut-il préciser que cette distinction n'implique aucune opposition hiérarchique entre le paysage qui constituerait un fond neutre et les figures qui seules seraient porteuses de signification, opposition que tend constamment à brouiller chez Bles l'idée même de paysage comme exégèse visuelle. Cet exemple invite plutôt à penser que la répartition séparée et technique de deux tâches autonomes relève d'une forme de collaboration picturale et intellectuelle complexe et hautement raffinée qui anticipe les collaborations ultérieures entre des artistes comme Jan Brueghel, P.P. Rubens ou Hendrick van Balen.<sup>76</sup>

Le *Paysage avec David et Bethsabée* ne questionne pas seulement l'unicité d'auteur mais aussi celle de l'oeuvre puisqu'il existe un deuxième exemplaire du tableau, absolument identique à celui de Boston<sup>77</sup> et

<sup>74</sup> Id., 261.

<sup>75</sup> Id., 262.

<sup>76</sup> Comme le remarque justement P. van den Brink : 'Ces créations étaient au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle ce qu'on pouvait trouver de plus précieux sur le marché des produits de luxe et se vendaient à des prix très élevés', Brink P. van den, "Le pourquoi et le comment" 35. Sur cette pratique picturale cf. également Woollett A.T. – Suchtelen A. van, *Rubens & Brueghel: A working Friendship* (Zwolle : 2006).

<sup>77</sup> La version de la collection Flemming – cf. ci-dessus note 64, numéro 2 – dont la qualité semble exclure l'attribution à un autre peintre selon Luc Serck, *Henri Bles et la peinture de paysage* 247.

qui par conséquent relève de la catégorie de l'*autocopie*,<sup>78</sup> distincte des *copies libres* et des *variations*<sup>79</sup> mais aussi de la production de copies exactes, parfois en grand nombre, par des peintres autres que l'auteur du modèle original. Ce qu'il importe de retenir ici, est la place quasi unique<sup>80</sup> d'une autocopie au sein de la vaste production de Bles,<sup>81</sup> et par conséquent l'attrait particulier que l'on peut en déduire, exercé par le tableau de Boston sur la série de ses copies.

Les tableaux qui constituent cette série se distinguent de ce premier cas en tant que copies *libres*: c'est à dire dégagées de la contrainte d'exactitude et définies par une dimension interprétative.<sup>82</sup> Trois d'entre elles sont attribuées à Lucas Gassel, qui fut par ailleurs en contact avec l'atelier de Bles.<sup>83</sup> On peut les classer selon le degré d'éloignement croissant vis-à-vis du tableau de Boston, et selon celui, relativement correspondant, de leur qualité picturale. La version Wadsworth [Fig. 17] qui est la plus proche du tableau de Bles, a aussi, en raison de sa qualité picturale été considérée par certains auteurs comme le modèle original de la série. Toute la partie des jardins reproduit exactement le tableau de Bles, mais la terrasse est l'objet d'une complète réinterprétation. L'une des modifications les plus directement apparentes est l'ajout au premier plan des deux motifs inédits d'un singe attaché à un

<sup>78</sup> Dont l'exécution implique généralement l'utilisation d'un moyen mécanique de reproduction, et un travail de copie devant l'original: dès le quinzième siècle plusieurs méthode de reproduction sont utilisés, le calque perforé, le calque au poinçon, le pochoir, le poncif – un feuillet intermédiaire souillé par le tamponnement à la poudre de noir d'os – et le quadrillage – qui permet d'obtenir une copie exacte, à l'échelle, agrandie ou réduite, selon le même rapport de proportion. À l'intérieur de ce groupe il faut distinguer les autocopies des copies exécutées par d'autres artistes. Enfin à l'intérieur du groupe des copies exactes faites par d'autres il faut distinguer des copies de qualité très variable.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Brink P. van den, "Le pourquoi et le comment".

<sup>80</sup> Il faut citer comme autre exemple d'autocopie ou de copie quasi-identique attribuable à Bles: la deuxième version du Saint Jérôme de Namur, de la collection Habitzelle à Dallas; la Montée au Calvaire (version Vienne, Gemäldegalerie et Saint Gall, Kunstmuseum); le petit tondo de saint Jérôme (Galerie Borghese et coll. Anonyme), le Saint Jérôme pénitent (musée des arts anciens de Namur et collection Halbetzelle, Dallas), sans parler des exemples plus nombreux de reprises avec de très légères modifications: notamment de plusieurs paysages avec Montée au Calvaire ou Pèlerins d'Emmaüs.

<sup>81</sup> Déterminées par des raisons extra-artistiques, d'ordre économique ou dépendant de la volonté spécifique d'un commanditaire souhaitant posséder un second exemplaire d'un tableau particulièrement apprécié.

<sup>82</sup> Sur ce point, cf. Mund, "La copie", 1998.

<sup>83</sup> À ce sujet cf. Serck, *Henri Bles et la peinture de paysage* 239–240.

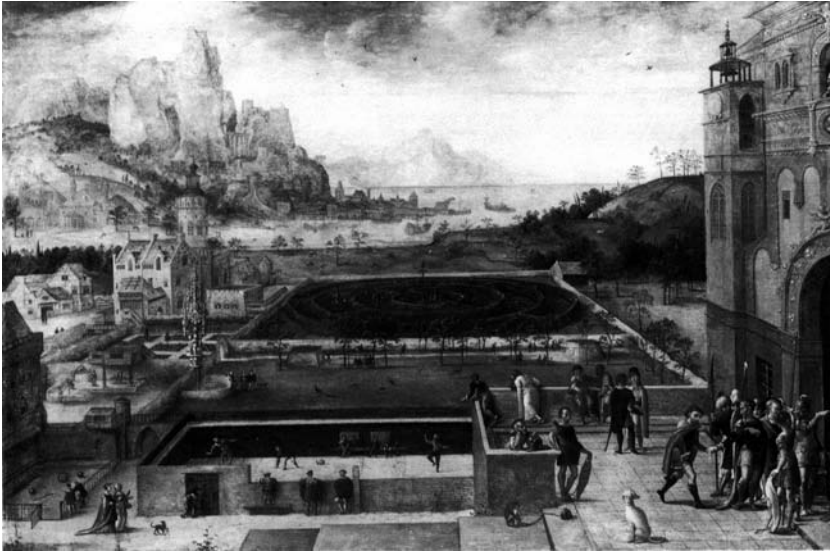


Fig. 17. Lucas Gassel, *David et Bethsabée* (1540). Huile sur bois, 45.5 × 69 cm. Hartford, The Wadsworth Atheneum, copyright The Wadsworth Atheneum.

boulet et d'un chien, les symboles contraires de l'animalité prisonnière de ses instincts charnels et de la fidélité qui amplifient sur un mode parergonal et rhyparographique la polarité de David et Urie. L'accent ainsi porté sur la figure de David, *exemplum* universel de la dualité charnelle et spirituelle de l'humanité, correspond aussi à une moindre exhaustivité vis-à-vis du récit : c'est là l'écart le plus significatif avec le tableau de Bles. Toutes les figures, bien que leur taille demeure similaire, ont été modifiées et à la place des deux groupes de soldats et de courtisans qui dans le tableau de Bles, dirigeaient par leurs regards et leurs gestes, vers les deux moments culminants de la perfidie et de la prophétie, ne subsiste qu'une série de soldats observant la remise de la lettre. La figure du roi au balcon, de plus petite taille et plus discrète dans la richesse ornementale de la façade, ne crée plus quant à elle l'effet de symétrie avec son double sur la terrasse, en même temps que la modification de son regard maintenant vaguement tourné vers le paysage et non plus nettement dirigé vers la figure de Bethsabée, et la disparition du sceptre royal brandi par un bras accoudé et nonchalant, tendent à atténuer l'effet puissant de domination scopique et royale. La disparition la plus significative est certainement celle des figures

symétriques de Nathan et de l'admoniteur. Leurs diverses fonctions phatique, d'inclusion du spectateur, d'opérateur de la conversion, et de mise en relation de divers registres spatiaux ne sont assurées ni par le spectateur éloigné et tourné vers la partie de jeu de paume ni par le soldat accoudé à l'avant-plan absorbé par la remise de la lettre à Urie.

La polarité tensive entre les deux parties du tableau que nous avons analysée comme un aspect essentiel du tableau de Bles, tend à s'estomper encore davantage dans les deux autres versions attribuées à Gassel. La version De Jonkheere [Fig. 18] montre une série de variations et de modifications qui relèvent de la pratique de la copie libre, et résultent notamment de l'agrandissement considérable de la taille du tableau (76.5 × 117 cm). Elles concernent l'avant-plan architectural plus étroit et étendu à toute la largeur du tableau, et la façade du palais qui de composite et lumineuse est devenue sobre et limitée à une seule tonalité marron sombre qui accentue sa fonction de repoussoir. La règle des trois tons habituelle chez Bles – chauds à l'avant-plan, verts au plan médian et bleus pour les lointains – a laissé place à un mélange de tons où les ocres prédominent jusque à l'horizon. Tout en gardant globalement la même disposition, les éléments architecturaux du tableau – la façade du palais à droite, la terrasse, le château dans le jardin et tous les bâtiments annexes – sont entièrement différents dans leur aspect et le style. De nombreux motifs dans le paysage ont été transformés<sup>84</sup> et les figures ont été entièrement réinterprétées. L'agrandissement de la taille du tableau s'est traduit notamment par une diminution conséquente de la taille des figures qui entraîne une impression de vacuité. Ici encore, la différence la plus significative concerne l'éloignement plus grand vis-à-vis de la référence au texte de Rabelais et de la valeur visuelle que donnait Bles aux jardins et aux scènes de jeu, et qui faisait contrepoint avec la scène du récit de David. Les deux modifications les plus frappantes sont d'une part la disparition de tous les observa-

<sup>84</sup> L'église et l'amphithéâtre en ruine au fond à gauche ont laissé place à un village, l'imposante montagne rocheuse est repoussée vers le bord gauche et laisse place à une zone aplanie descendant lentement vers le rivage marin où se profilent un gibet et plusieurs roues de torture, la ville portuaire du fond très détaillée chez Bles a disparu dans les lointains, et dans la partie droite du jardin, la colline boisée a disparu au profit d'un jardin plat encéint d'une muraille et de tours d'angle. Le jeu de paume s'étend sur une plus grande longueur, mais il est aussi plus éloigné de l'avant-plan, la taille des figures des joueurs a diminué.

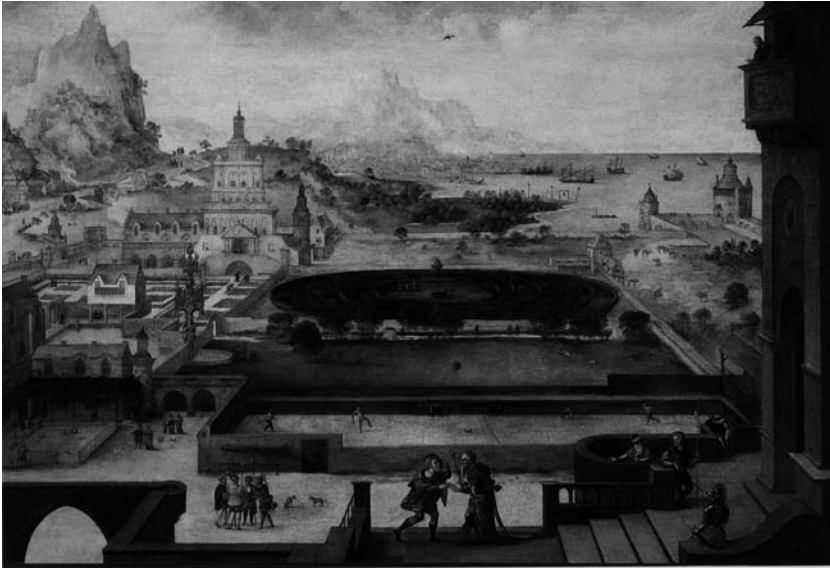


Fig. 18. Lucas Gassel, *David and Bethsabée* (1540). Huile sur bois, 70 × 100 cm.  
Localisation actuelle inconnue.

teurs qui chez Bles mettaient l'accent sur la dimension scopique. Et de l'autre, la dissemblance complète entre le personnage au balcon (privé des attributs royaux du sceptre et de la couronne), et la figure du roi David remettant le message à Urie sur la terrasse centrale ; ce qui par conséquence annule la polarité que le tableau de Bles créait entre les deux figures, noble et ignoble, céleste et terrestre, du roi.

Plus éloignée encore du tableau de Bles, une troisième version (*version Palmella* [Fig. 19], est attribuée à Gassel eu égard au style caractéristique de ses figures trapues dont le nombre ici réduit est compensé par un considérable agrandissement de leur taille. Ce traitement nouveau accorde à la scène de la remise de la lettre à Urie tout l'espace de la terrasse. Une nouvelle différence majeure est la présence aux côtés du roi au balcon d'un personnage supplémentaire. Si la figure du roi au balcon, beaucoup plus petite que celle de la terrasse crée un effet d'éloignement perspectif, c'est au détriment, encore une fois, de l'effet de symétrie polaire. Sa ressemblance avec la figure de la terrasse permet de l'identifier au roi, et son index pointé croisant un bas-relief de Vénus ornant la façade, suggère l'ordre adressé au messenger à ses côtés. Ces deux modifications picturales en terme de logique narrative

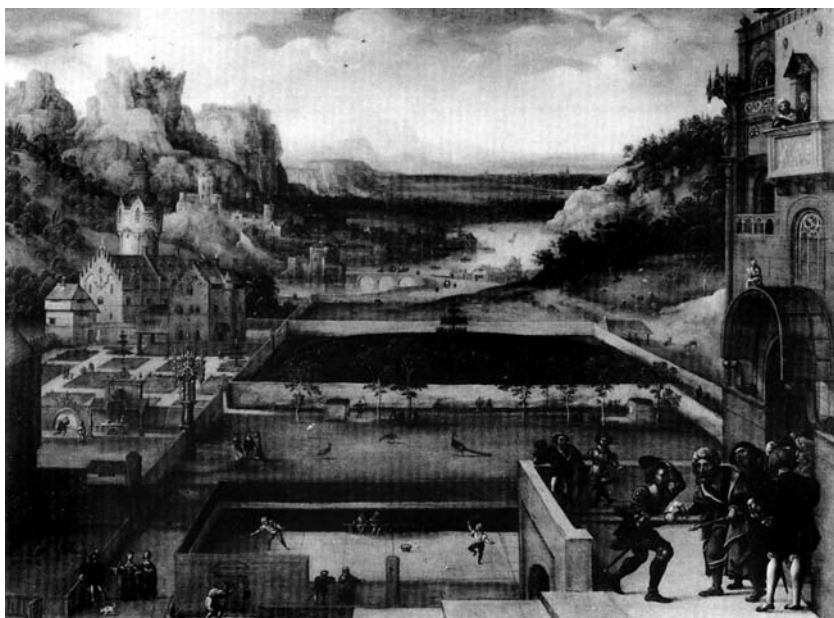


Fig. 19. Lucas Gassel, *David et Bethsabée*. Huile sur bois, 33 × 45 cm. Ancienne collection Duc de Palmella, localisation actuelle inconnue.

et optique s'accomplissent au détriment de la logique exégétique et scopique du tableau de Bles.

Proche de la version Wadsworth, le *dessin Anonyme du Louvre* [Fig. 13], attribué à l'entourage de Lucas Gassel,<sup>85</sup> présente une variété de détails inédits dont les plus frappants sont la richesse ornementale de la façade du palais de David, l'ajout d'un paysage fluvial et d'une ville à gauche du Palais, les figures de la terrasse en vêtements contemporains, ou encore la représentation techniquement très précise des scènes du jeu de paume et de tir à l'arc. Derrière le roi, à l'abri du porche, quatre soldats armés et tenant des hallebardes ont remplacé les courtisans et le prophète Nathan. À la place de l'admoniteur du tableau de Bles, un spectateur, coiffé d'un panache, observe simplement la partie de jeu de paume avec d'autres spectateurs. La figure du regard royal au balcon laisse place à la représentation plus narrative du roi qui indique d'un geste Bethsabée, à l'attention de son messenger. Le parc à bêtes sauvages décrit dans *Gargantua* laisse place

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Serck, *Henri Bles et la peinture de paysage* 267–269.



à un paysage fluvial animé, et toutes les figures scopiques du tableau de Boston ont disparu : les deux observateurs du jeu de balle, ceux accoudés au-dessus des bassins dans le jardin du palais de Bethsabée, l'enfant hissé sur un banc et le fou reluquant la partie de paume, ou les dames tenant un épervier. Autrement dit, ici encore l'abondance de nouveaux détails a pour corollaire la disparition d'une série de motifs significatifs, disparition qui modifie profondément la logique scopique du récit et tend à annuler la référence au texte de Rabelais.

Dans les copies anonymes, l'écart vis-à-vis du tableau de Bles s'accroît, mais il serait fastidieux de toutes les décrire et pour notre propos un dernier exemple suffira : celui de la collection du Marylbone Cricket Club à Londres [Fig. 20] qui s'inspire directement de la version Palmella attribuée à Lucas Gassel. Derrière David donnant la lettre à Urie, le peintre a placé deux personnages de Prêlat, l'un en vêtement rouge de cardinal, l'autre en noir, situé dans l'angle du porche. Ils semblent, dans le dos du roi, commenter la scène. Le cardinal tout en adressant un regard vers le spectateur extérieur pointe un index dénonciateur vers le roi et au-delà, vers le muret où un texte gravé vient légèrer son geste : 'David alors qu'il avait commis l'adultère avec Bethsabée envoie Urie au combat pour être tué par les ennemis.' L'insertion d'un texte moralisant signale la volonté du peintre de bien faire comprendre au spectateur la dénonciation du crime de David. Le remplacement du prophète Nathan par des prélats contemporains du peintre, offre un exemple intéressant d'actualisation polémique d'un épisode biblique ou de ce que Max Engammare, à propos des représentations de l'épisode de David et Bethsabée dans les Bibles illustrées de la première moitié du seizième siècle, centrées sur la perfidie de David ou sur l'érotisme de Bethsabée, a qualifié de 'représentation critique' de l'ancien testament.<sup>86</sup> Mais la nécessité d'en passer par une insertion textuelle dans l'image et l'insistance explicite et didactique du cardinal admoniteur correspondent à des procédés très éloignés de la pensée picturale plus subtile et suggestive mise en œuvre par l'exégèse visuelle de Bles.

Les versions restantes témoignent chacune d'une distance toujours plus grande vis-à-vis de la version de Bles : par la disparition de nombreuses figures de spectateurs, voire du roi au balcon, et l'ajout de scènes anecdotiques – jardiniers, baigneuses nues, promeneurs – qui

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Engammare, "David côté jardin" 2003.



Fig. 20. Anonyme, *David et Bethsabée*. Huile sur bois, Londres, Marylbone Cricket Club, copyright the Marylbone Cricket Club.

se substituent à la contemplation méditative et à l'accent porté sur le thème du regard.<sup>87</sup> Arrêtons-nous donc ici et retenons deux points; l'hypothèse d'abord selon laquelle le tableau de Bles, peint vers 1540 ou peu avant<sup>88</sup> serait le modèle initial d'une série importante de copies, étendue sur une vingtaine d'années,<sup>89</sup> et en second lieu, la dimension interprétative de cet ensemble de copies qui se distancient progressivement de la version originale de Bles.<sup>90</sup> Ce qui disparaît de manière

<sup>87</sup> Ces deux versions partagent avec le dessin du Louvre le large fleuve à gauche du palais de David et la décoration chargée de la façade du Palais, mais leur localisation actuelle inconnue et les médiocres reproductions de catalogues de vente ne permettent pas un examen précis.

<sup>88</sup> Avant la version *Restelli* portant le monogramme de Gassel et datée de 1540.

<sup>89</sup> La date de 1559 figure sur la version Marylbone.

<sup>90</sup> Cette hypothèse de classement, que je partage avec Luc Serck, va néanmoins à l'encontre des autres propositions concernant cette série. Cf. Lugt F., *Inventaire général des dessins. Écoles du Nord. Louvre, Maîtres des Anciens Pays-Bas avant 1550* (Paris: 1968); Legrand C., *Le paysage en Europe du XV<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: 1990); Morgan R., *Tennis, the Development of the European Ball Game* (Oxford:1995); Gibson W., *Mirror of the Earth*; Ainsworth, "An Unfinished Landscape Painting". Par ailleurs Luc Serck signale la description du Paysage avec David et Bethsabée dans un inventaire des biens du duc de Modène dressé en 1662 – 'Un paese alla similitudine del Civetta dove

croissante dans les copies, c'est la thématization de la vision : la multiplication de métaphores visuelles, de figures de spectateurs, de niveaux de regard, les effets de polarité et d'analogie visuelle, les états variés de visions (entre aveuglement charnel et discernement spirituel) exemplifiés par les protagonistes sacrés, en bref, l'ensemble des caractéristiques et des procédés picturaux spécifiques du *Weltlandschaft* de Bles que désigne l'expression d'exégèse visuelle. Finalement, ce que met en valeur, par comparaison et par contraste, cet ensemble de copies, ce sont la qualité d'exégèse visuelle du paysage de Bles, et sa 'densité iconique', pour reprendre la notion de Gottfried Boehm désignant la capacité d'un tableau à rassembler les caractères de simultanité, de polarisation, d'exhaustivité et d'inclusion du spectateur.<sup>91</sup> C'est à elles que se mesure la qualité exceptionnelle du tableau et son pouvoir de générer en tant que modèle, une multitude de copies.

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David osserva Bersabea a lavarsi: dà le lettere ad Uria. La Donna è finta in un bellissimo giardini appresso al laberinto, di que dal laberinto i si gioca alla raccheta'. L'expression 'à la manière de', pourrait suggérer qu'il s'agit de l'une des copies du tableau de Bles.

<sup>91</sup> Boehm G., "Die Bilderfrage", in id. (ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?* (München: 1994) 325-343.

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‘QUAE LECTA CANISIUS OFFERT ET SPECTATA DIU’:  
THE PICTORIAL IMAGES IN PETRUS CANISIUS’S  
*DE MARIA VIRGINE* OF 1577/1583

Walter S. Melion

First published at Ingolstadt in 1577 with a dedication to Albert V, Duke of Bavaria, Saint Petrus Canisius’s *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (*Five Books on Mary, Incomparable Virgin and Most Holy Mother of God*), the first Jesuit treatise on the Virgin Mary, constitutes the second volume of Canisius’s *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* (*Commentary on the Corruptors of the Divine Word*), the proposed three-part refutation of the *Magdeburg Centuries* upon which he labored for more than a decade [Fig. 1].<sup>1</sup> Erudite yet heartfelt, both compendious and readable, *De Maria Virgine* is a work of positive theology, written in imitation of the Church Fathers, not least Saint

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<sup>1</sup> On the *Mariale*, see Brodrick J., S.J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago: 1980; reprint ed., 1998) 716–748; Haub R., “Petrus Canisius: *Marientraktat*, ‘*Mariale*’”, in Baumstark R. (ed.), *Rom in Bayern: Kunst und Spiritualität der ersten Jesuiten* [exh. cat., Bayerisches Nationalmuseum] (Munich: 1997) 525–526, and “Petrus Canisius: Manuskript zum *Marientraktat*”, in *ibid.*, 548–549. In his autobiographical *Testament*, dictated between late 1596 and early 1597, Canisius explains that his aim in writing the *Mariale* was to restore the Marian piety of the Fathers, and by doing so, to strengthen faith in the orthodox Church and to oppose its new enemies, that is, the *Magdeburg Centuriators*; see Petrus Canisius S.J., *Das Testament des Petrus Canisius: Vermächtnis und Auftrag*, (eds.) J. Oswald and R. Haub (Frankfurt am Main: 1997) 51–52. As Brodrick rightly observes in *Saint Peter Canisius* 717, Canisius broadened the *Mariale*’s scope to encompass the entire history of Marian devotion; he aimed ultimately to refute not only the arguments of the *Centuriators* but also those of all anti-Marian heretics. On the *Mariale* in the context of the Counter-Reformation cult of the Virgin in Bavaria, see Heal B., *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648* (Cambridge: 2007) 148–206, esp. 148, 150, 157, 189, and, on the crucial part played by Marian images in renewal of the cult, 162–188; see also, on Canisius’s efforts to renew religious life in Bavaria, Buxbaum E.M., *Petrus Canisius und die kirchliche Erneuerung des Herzogtums Bayern, 1549–1556* (Rome: 1973). On the *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis*, see Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* 680–711; Diez K., “Petrus Canisius als Theologe”, in J. Oswald and P. Rummels (eds.), *Petrus Canisius – Reformator der Kirche: Festschrift zum 400. Todestag des zweiten Apostels Deutschlands* (Augsburg: 1996) 178–193, esp. 188; and Haub R., “Petrus Canisius als Schriftsteller”, in Baumstark, ed., *Rom in Bayern* 540; “Petrus Canisius: Widerlegung der ‘*Magdeburger Centurien*’”, in *ibid.*, 547–548; and “Petrus Canisius: Manuskript zum Traktat über den Apostel Petrus”, in *ibid.*, 549–550.

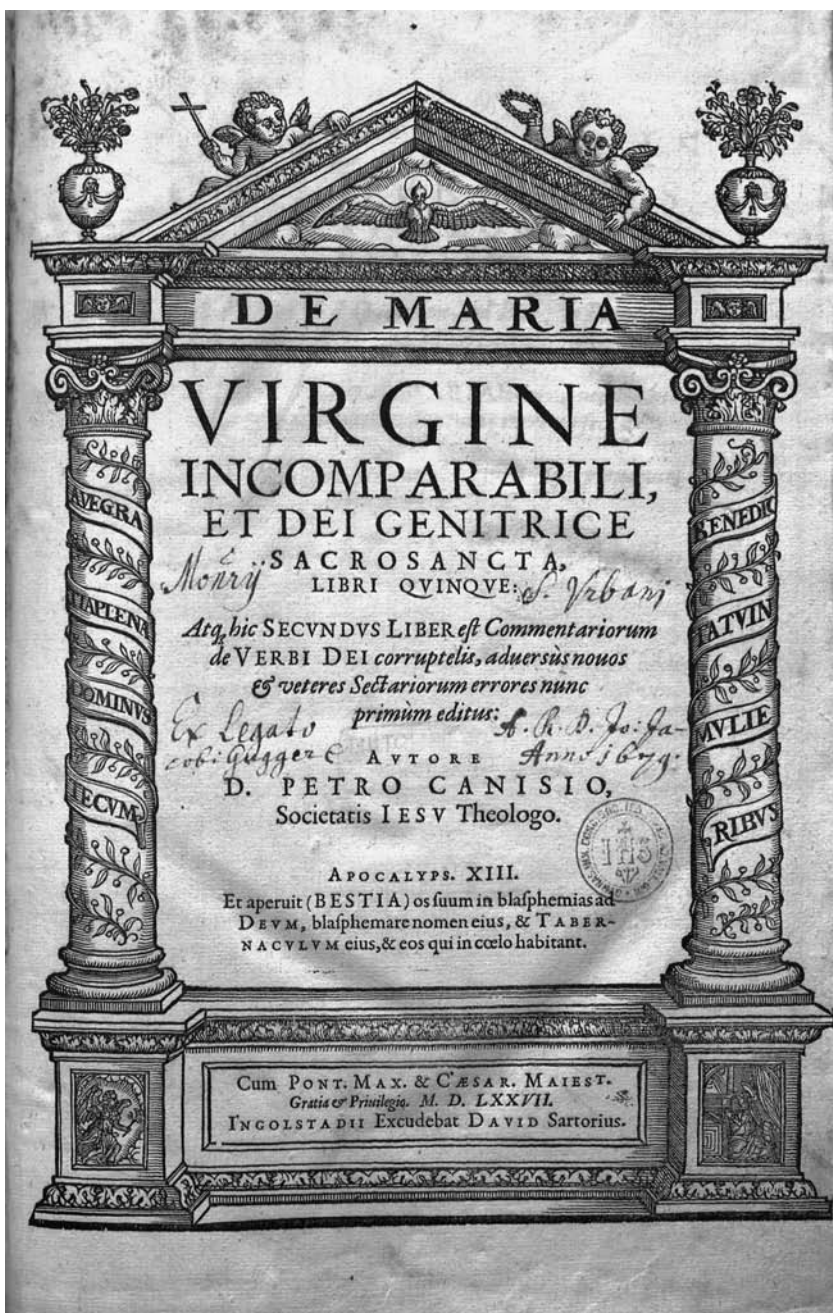


Fig. 1. Petrus Canisius, *De Maria Virgine incomparabili et Dei genitrice sacrosancta libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1577), title-page. Maurits Sabbelibiotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Jerome. Having received papal support, it proved influential, perhaps more as a summa of Marian doctrine and devotion than as a controversialist instrument. As Pope Pius V and Father General Francis Borgia had encouraged Canisius to write the *Commentarium*, so Pope Gregory XIII and Father General Everard Mercurian urged him to extend it by writing a comprehensive *opus Marianum*. Canisius reissued *De Maria Virgine* in 1583, likewise at Ingolstadt, combining it with his earlier disquisition on Saint John the Baptist, *De sanctissimi praecursoris Domini Ioannis Baptistae historia evangelica* (*On the Evangelical History of John the Baptist, the Most Holy Precursor of the Lord*), in a revised omnibus edition of the *Commentarium* [Fig. 2].

Commonly known as the *Opus Mariale*, or simply, *Mariale*, the treatise offers a summa of Marian doctrine, but also doubles as a meditative text, whose five parts describe and justify the Virgin's *excellencia*, *nobilitas*, *virtus*, *sanctitas*, and *dignitas*. Prefacing each subsection is a woodcut print of a Marian icon or mystery, accompanied by a poem expounding the image and its relation to Canisius's text, the majority composed by Philippus Menzelius, Professor Ordinarius of Medicine at the University of Ingolstadt. In the 1583 edition, the sequence opens with a titular image attaching to the dedicatory and general prefaces, that conflates elements from three miracle-working icons of the Madonna: the *Salus Populi Romani* from Santa Maria Maggiore, the *Santa Maria in Vallicella* from the Roman church of the same name, and the *Madonna dei Mantellini* from the Sienese church of Santa Maria del Carmine, the latter based on a celebrated Byzantine icon of the *Hodegetria* type, also housed at the Carmelite Church in Siena [Fig. 3].<sup>2</sup> There follow images that introduce or distill, and in some cases bridge, the five books of the *Mariale*: the *Tree of Jesse* illustrating Book I on Mary's parentage and genealogy, birth and girlhood, exemplary life, morals, and

<sup>2</sup> In effect, Canisius promulgates a new Marian icon deriving from these distinguished predecessors. On the Lucan image of the Virgin, housed in the altar tabernacle of the Capella Paolina since 1613, and known as the *Salus Populi Romani* since the nineteenth century, see Belting H., *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, (trans.) Jephcott E. (Chicago and London: 1994) 68–69. On the *Santa Maria in Vallicella*, revered by Filippo Neri and Cesare Baronio as the chief Marian relic of the Oratorian congregation in Rome, and housed in the painted tabernacle by Rubens since 1608, see zur Mühlen I. von, *Bild und Vision: Peter Paul Rubens und der 'Pinsel Gottes'* (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, and Vienna: 1998) 139, 144–145. On the *Madonna dei Mantellini*, housed in the painted tabernacle by Francesco Vanni since 1595, see Krüger K., *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren: Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien* (Munich: 2001) 144.

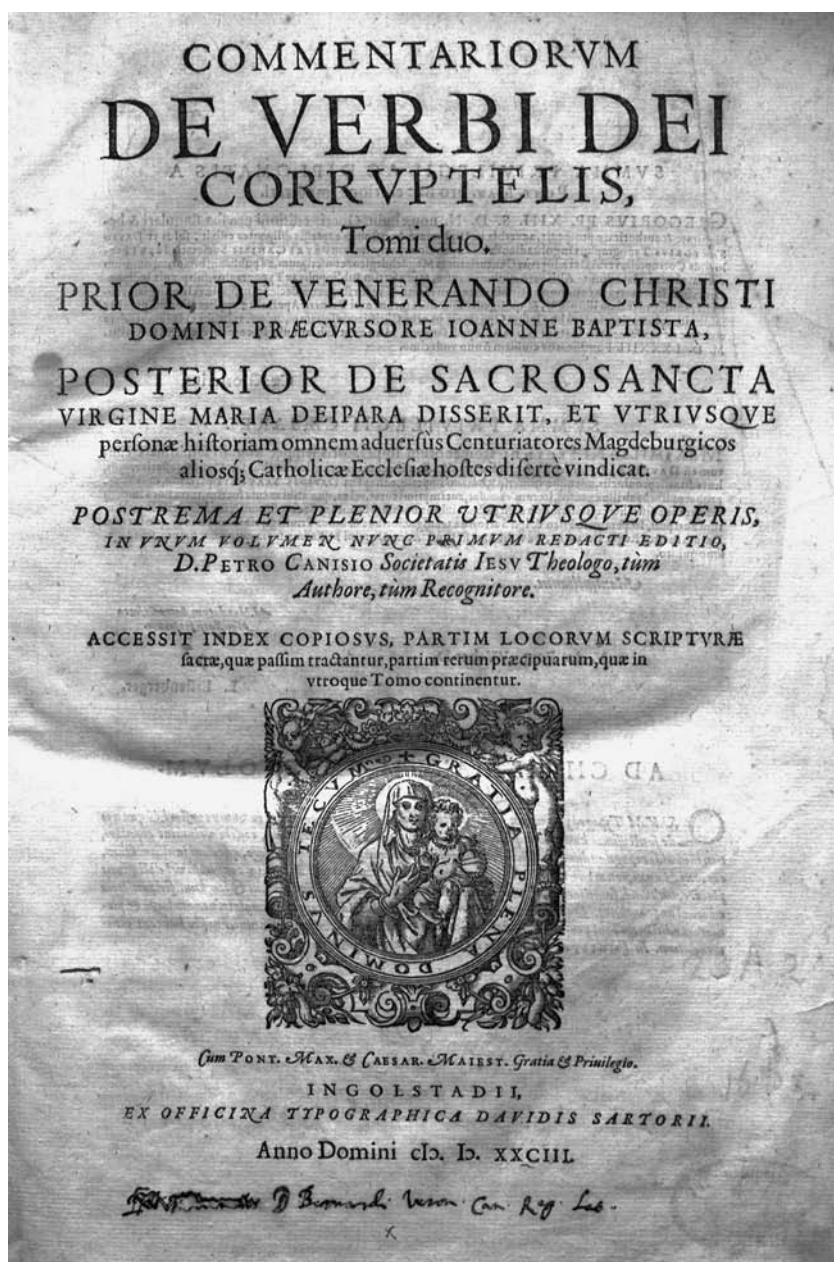


Fig. 2. Petrus Canisius, *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), title-page. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

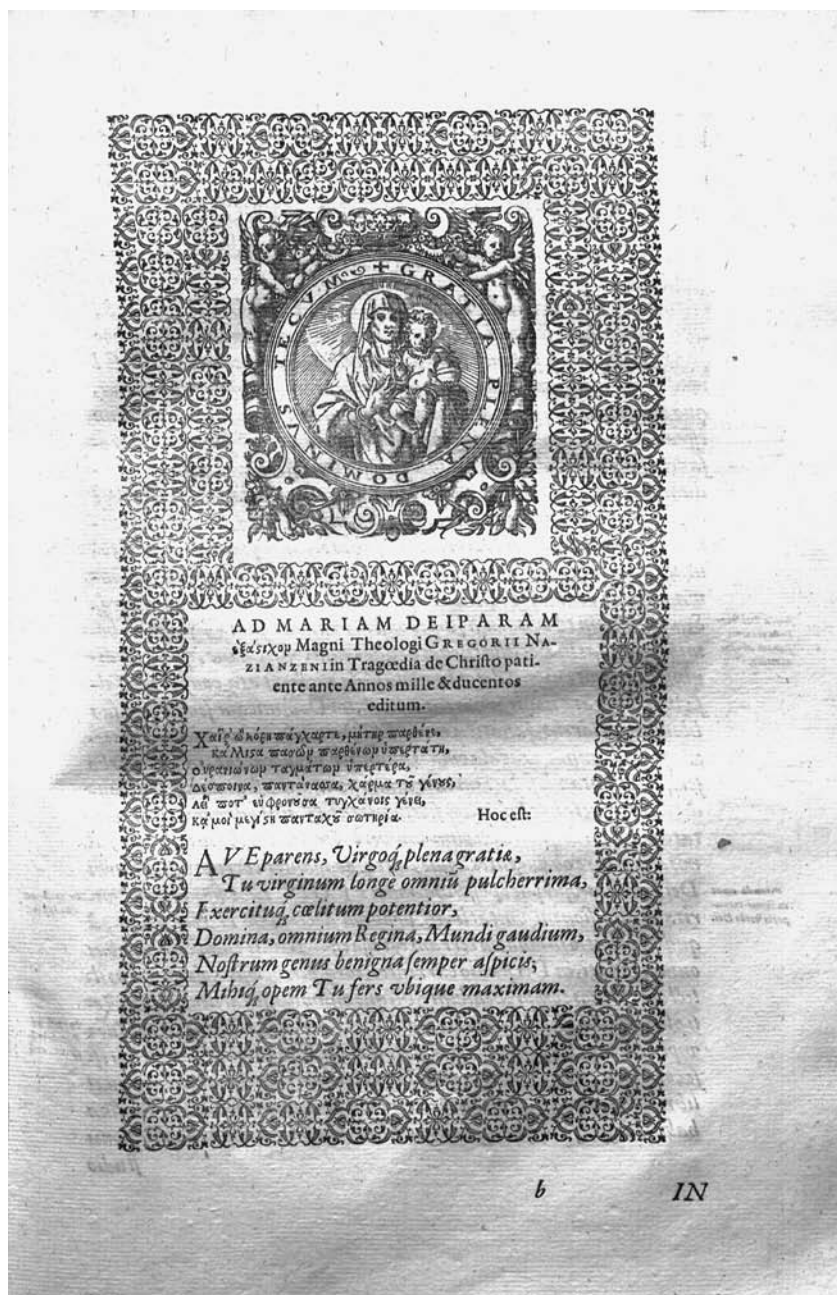


Fig. 3. *Icon of the Virgin and Child*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), dedicatory and general prefaces, fol. b r. Maurits Sabbhebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

pursuits, and most importantly, Immaculate Conception [Fig. 4]; the *Icon of the Most Beautiful Virgin as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God*, that mediates the transition from Book I to Book II on Mary's perpetual virginity and espousal to Joseph [Fig. 5]; the *Annunciation* illustrating Book III on the mystery of the Incarnation, and specifically on the angelic salutation, Mary's consensual response, and her divine motherhood [Fig. 6]; the *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* illustrating Book IV on the virtues of Mary and the human passions she experienced during the Nativity, Visitation, Presentation, Discovery of Christ among the Doctors, and the Passion of Christ [Fig. 7]; and the *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin* illustrating Book V on Mary's death, Assumption, intercessory miracles, and cult [Fig. 8]. In addition, the *Virgo in Sole*, its symbols deriving from the Song of Songs, is repeated twice to mark relevant chapters of Books IV and V [Fig. 7], while others images, such as the *Visitation*, *Nativity*, *Presentation*, *Discovery of Christ among the Doctors*, and *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*, complement the chapters on Mary's share in the infancy and Passion of Christ [Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13]. Canisius interweaves refutations of various anti-Marian heresies, both past and present, among all five books, but especially Books IV and V.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The 1583 edition contains fifteen illustrations, in addition to an illustrated title-page showing the *Icon of Maria Deipara*, as follows: *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* (fol. a5 verso; accompanies the *Epistola nuncupatoria*); *Icon of the Maria Deipara* (fol. b1 recto; accompanies the *In librum secundum de corruptelis verbi Dei...praefatio*); *Tree of Jesse* (fol. c6 recto; accompanies chapter 1 of Book I); *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God* (p. 111; accompanies *In librum secundum de Maria Virgine...praefatio*); *Annunciation* (p. 255; accompanies chapter 1 of Book III); *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 316; accompanies chapters 12 and 13 of Book III); repeat of *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 385; accompanies *In librum quartum de Maria Virgine...praefatio* and chapter 1 of Book IV); *Visitation* (p. 401; accompanies chapters 2 and 3 of Book IV); *Nativity with Adoration of the Shepherds* (p. 439; accompanies chapter 9 of Book IV); *Presentation in the Temple* (p. 453; accompanies chapters 8 and 9 of Book IV); *The Twelve-Year Old Christ Found among the Doctors by Mary and Joseph* (p. 478; accompanies chapter 14 of Book IV); *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows* (p. 547; accompanies chapters 26 and 27 of Book IV); *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin* (p. 577; accompanies chapter 29 of Book IV and *In librum quintum de Maria Virgine...praefatio*); repeat of *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* (p. 648; accompanies chapters 7 and 8 of Book V); repeat of *Icon of Maria Deipara* (p. 791; accompanies chapters 24 and 25 of Book V). Poems by Phillipus Menzelius expound the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin*, the *Icon of the Maria Deipara*, the *Tree of Jesse*, the *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo*, the *Annunciation*, the first repeat of the *Virgo in Sole*, the *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*, and the *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin*. Several of the prints are monogrammed as follows: *Icon of the Pulcherrima Virgo* (MF joined); *Annunciation* (MC, CM, MvC, or CvM superimposed, with a fluttering banner attached at left); *Visitation* (MF joined);

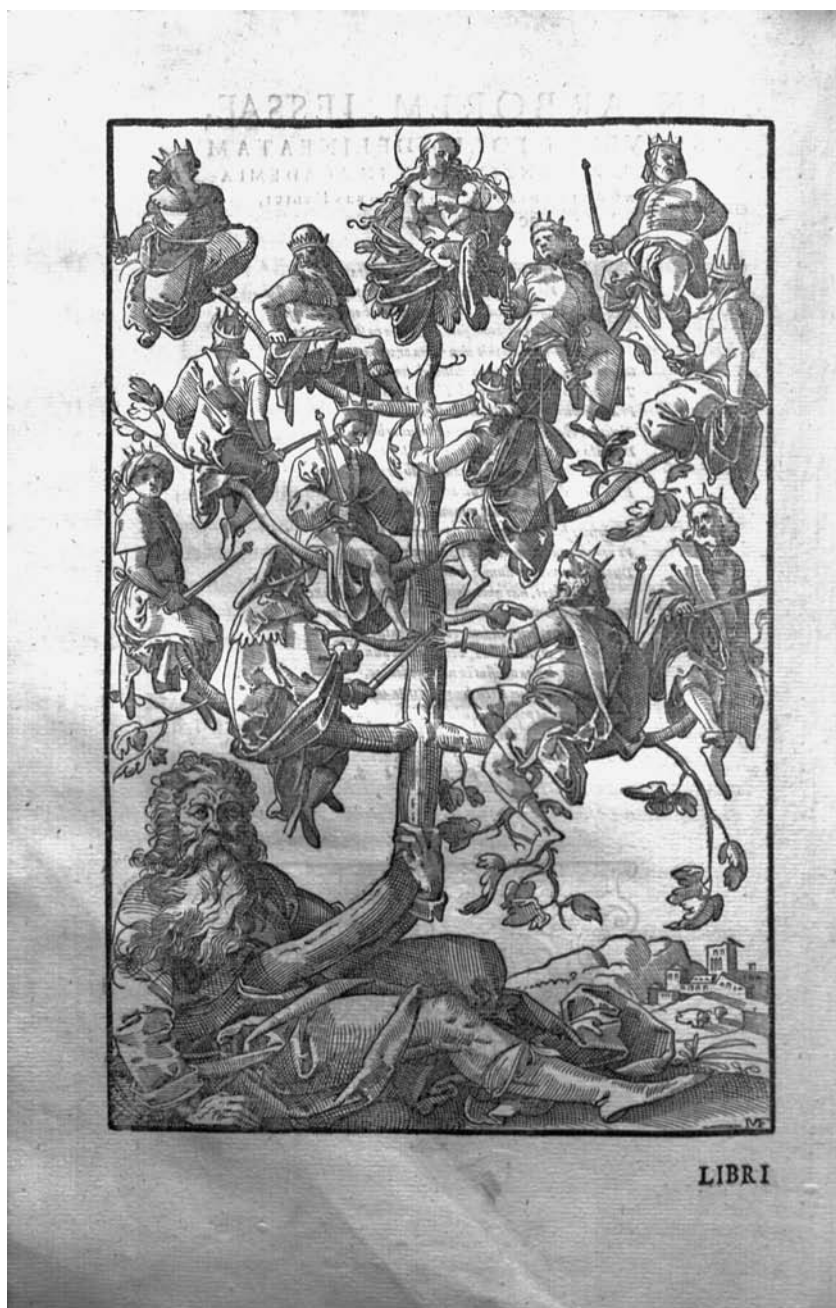


Fig. 4. *Tree of Jesse*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...], (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book I, chapter 1, fol. 6v. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 5. *Icon of the Most Beautiful Virgin as Daughter, Bride, and Mother of God.* Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book II, chapter 1, p. 111. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

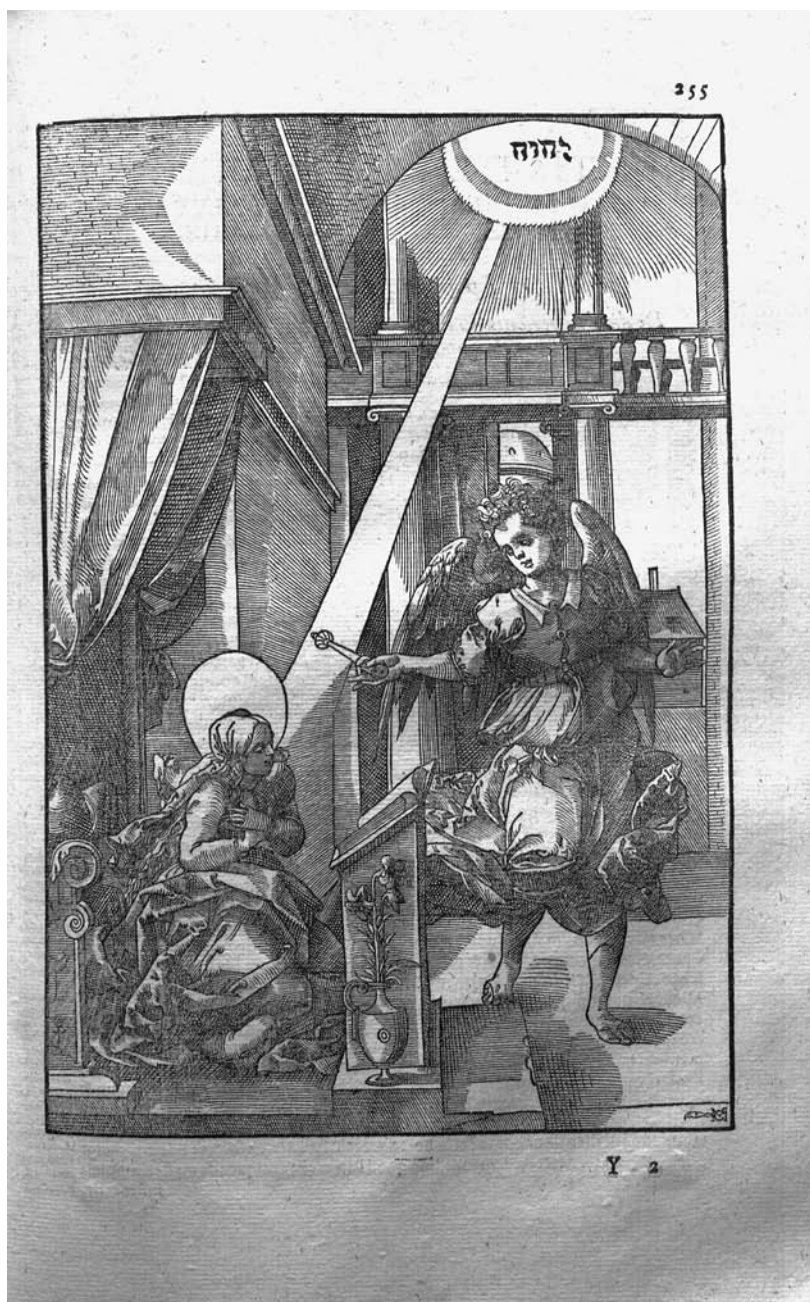


Fig. 6. *Annunciation*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's, *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book III, chapter 1, p. 255. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.





Fig. 7. *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 1, p. 385. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.





Fig. 8. *Angelic Coronation of the Immaculate Virgin*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book V, chapter 1, p. 577. Maurits Sabbhebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 9. *Visitation*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 3, p. 401. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 10. *Nativity*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 9, p. 439. Maurits Sabbibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 11. *Presentation*. Woodcut illustration in Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 11, p. 453. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 12. *Discovery of Christ among the Doctors*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 14, p. 478. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



Fig. 13. *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows*. Woodcut illustration to Petrus Canisius's *De Maria Virgine* [...], in *Commentarium de Verbi Dei corruptelis* [...] (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583), book IV, chapter 27, p. 547. Maurits Sabbebibliotheek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.



The prefatory woodcuts function as headings to Canisius's *prae-fationes*, serve to indicate how Marian doctrine is bound up with the cult of images, and certify that the *Mariale* issues equally from the author's reading of Marian texts and viewing of Marian images (*quae lecta Canisius offert et spectata diu*).<sup>4</sup> Canisius invites the reader-viewer to meditate on sacred images in imitation of Mary herself, whose practice of contemplative devotion grounds his own, as he poignantly implies on several occasions. My paper focuses on two illustrations – the *Pulcherrima Virgo* from Books I and II, and the *Annunciation* from Book III – that support Canisius's account of the Virgin as a viewer of images and an epitome of contemplative image making [Figs. 5 and 6]. Mary's expert use of all her senses, but especially of the sense of sight, offers a guide to users of the *Mariale*, mediating their encounter with the devotional prints that mark the treatise's chief subdivisions. Here I want to ask how and why Marian doctrine, for Canisius, is bound up with the cult of images, and specifically with the prayerful act of beholding the *effigies Mariae Virginis*, that proves central to the doctrinal and meditative program of the *Mariale*.

Introduced by Philippus Menzelius's epigrammatic poem *In iconem sequentem*, the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that precedes Book II, is also closely linked to the argument of chapter 13, that closes Book I, "On the Studies, Morals, and Perfect Life of Mary, Especially before She Was

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*Nativity* (TS superimposed, i.e., Tobias Stimmer); and *Christ Found among the Doctors* (TS superimposed, i.e., Tobias Stimmer). The *Icon of Maria Deipara* and *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* were printed from the same blocks used for the 1577 edition of the *Mariale*. The other illustrations in the 1583 edition, though they repeat the subjects first illustrated in 1577, were recut: in all these cases, the compositions become more complex spatially, the chiaroscuro more subtle and varied, the figures' attitudes, gestures, and facial expressions more specific yet forceful, the play of drapery more elaborate. The pictorial style might best be characterized in rhetorical terms as more richly ornamented. The placement of the illustrations remains largely the same with the following exceptions: the *Virgo in Sole Surrounded by Symbols of the Immaculate Conception* replaces the *Pietà/Virgin of Sorrows* at the start of Book IV; and a repeat of the *Icon of Maria Deipara* replaces the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin Holding the Christ Child* between chapters 24 and 25 of Book V. It is important to note that the two illustrations reused in 1577 and 1583 are images of images – the *Effigy of the Glorious Virgin* and *Icon of Maria Deipara*. The fact that the images were retained and improved in the 1583 edition suggests their functional importance to the book's argument. Both editions of the *Mariale* were published by David Sartorius.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Philippus Menzelius, "In sequentem effigiem carmen", in Petrus Canisius S.J., *De Maria Virgine incomparabili, et Dei genitricis sacrosancta, libri quinque* (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1577) 233. This poem accompanies the illustration of the *Annunciation*.

Greeted by the Angel".<sup>5</sup> And yet, the picture portrays Mary as mature rather than juvenile, thereby suggesting that the virtues expounded by Canisius informed all her life; having been perfected at an early age and then practised assiduously, they have secured the heavenly glory she is now seen to enjoy and also to offer, her eyes graciously lowered toward whosoever invokes her aid. The inscription identifies her in the second person as 'the most beautiful Virgin, unique among the company of women, at one and the same time daughter, bride, and parent of God'.<sup>6</sup> In a closely argued sequence of three stanzas, Menzelius begins by describing Mary – 'her spirit pure, her eyes modestly downcast, her speech most chaste' – as the living embodiment of 'splendid virginity' (*candida Virginitas*); she is the 'best imitatrix' who, even while subject to the fragile body (*fragili iam dum sub corpore*), for our benefit fashioned her life into an image of the heavenly life to come (*nobis [...] coelicolum praestas imitatrix optima vitam*).<sup>7</sup> Menzelius plays upon the implied antithesis of subjection (*sub corpore*) and triumph (*praestas*) reconciled in the person of Mary, the *imitatrix* who offered herself as an image to be imitated; viewed in this light, the icon of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, approachable yet exalted, humane yet celestial, may be construed as a version of the living image Mary purveyed as a proleptic object of imitation.<sup>8</sup> It is in other words a doubled image, that is, an image of this Marian image.

Stanza two encourages us to view the icon through Mary's eyes, seeing it through the subjective lens of her self-experience in Christ. Menzelius states that the mystery of the Incarnation has a universal effect upon all creation, so stupefying mother nature that she recognizes nothing of herself in the wondrous conception of Christ (*stupuit partus Natura creatrix/ Miros, more novo, neque sese agnovit in ipsis*); yet this same mystery affects Mary intimately, causing her to recognize that the most inviolate Virgin who, being child, spouse, and mother to

<sup>5</sup> "De Mariae studiis, moribus & vita perfecta, praesertim antequam ab Angelo salutaretur," in Petrus Canisius, S.J., *Alter tomus commentariorum de Verbi Dei corruptelis, adversus novos et veteres Sectariorum errores. In eo libris quinque disseritur de Maria Virgine incomparabili, et Dei genitrice sacrosancta*. (Ingolstadt, David Sartorius: 1583) 98–109 [this edition hereafter cited as *De Maria Virgine* (1583)].

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 111: 'Foeminei tu sola chori pulcherrima Virgo,/ Una Dei pariter filia, sponsa, parens'.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.: 'Scilicet & fragili iam dum sub corpore nobis,/ Pura animi, deicta oculos, castissima fando,/ Coelicolum praestas imitatrix optima vitam'.



Christ, enlightens and honors the physical world, is she herself (*illa tibi*), who begot the Holy Name shining beyond the highest heaven, immense and perfect beyond measure, by whom it was fit that she be cherished (*peperit clarum trans aethera nomen, / Exemplumque, coli quo te decet, edidit ipsa / Immensum, ac numero perfectum prorsus ab omni*). In this formulation, as Christ is to Jove the Thunderer (*Tonantis*), so Mary is to Juno his sister and bride (*sospite*).<sup>9</sup> Menzelius is implying that the icon operates as a meditative *speculum*, that allows Mary to visualize herself in a multiply specific relation to Christ (*illa Tonantis filia, sponsa, parens, eadem intactissima Virgo*), and further, incorporates us into this act of self-knowing. To behold the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, then, is look into the mirror of Marian virtue, as did Mary herself.

Stanza three reproves all those who, relying entirely on brute sense and incapable of discernment, resist efficacious Faith; calling them accusatory Jews, rabid heretics, and profane rationalists, Menzelius demands that they submit to the Truth, whose inextinguishable light this sacred page gives forth (*concedite Vero, / Cuius inextinctum sacra haec dat pagina lumen*). The term *pagina* refers to the page printed with the poetic *epigramma*, but also to the text of the *Mariale*, and no less to the imprinted image of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that offers enlightenment to these blind souls bound by darkness (*damnata tenebris pectora*). What they may discern by turns, if they read and see the *sacram paginam* with open eyes, hearts, and minds, is first the image of the Virgin as consummate *imitatrix*, then the image of the image she fashioned of her life and the mirror-image she fashions of herself, by applying her spirit (*pura animi*), face (*deiecta oculos*), and speech (*castissima fando*) to the task of meditative mimesis.

Menzelius's central conceit – that the Virgin, by fashioning and beholding the image of herself, devoutly epitomizes the act of sacred image-making – derives in fact from the argument of Canisius's chapter 13. His aim, as he states at the start, is to make clearly visible (*id vero evidentius fiet*) Mary's pursuits, character, and exemplary life (*studiis, moribus & vita perfecta*), as far as these may be observed from close reading of the Fathers (*quantum mihi sane in veterum lectione versanti, atque rem omnem*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 'Ergo etiam mundi regnator maximus ipse / Humanos quondam sibi quum circumdaret artus, / Ad tantum te legit opus, te sospite nasci / Instituit [...] / At tuus hinc duplicatur honos: iamque illa Tonantis / Filia, Sponsa, Parens, eadem intactissima Virgo, / Virgo decus rerum, Virgo lux altera mundi / Illa tibi peperit clarum trans aethera nomen'.

*diligentius peruestiganti licuit observare*).<sup>10</sup> Among other patristic sources, he cites Jerome's *Epistle to Laeta on the Institution of Daughters* and *Epistle to Gaudentius on the Education of Children*, in which precepts (*leges*), duties (*officia*), and studies (*studia*) for the rearing of maidens are enumerated.<sup>11</sup> All such rules, he avers, may be seen to have been perfectly expressed and enacted by the Virgin (*in nostra Virguncula ad unguem expressas reque ipsa comprobata habemus*), in whose education we may observe, by common consent, whatsoever wise men have deemed necessary for the advancement of maidens in sincere piety (*ad unguem observatum esse, quicquid sapientes [...] puellis ad sinceram pietatem recte provehendis unquam praescripserunt*).<sup>12</sup> Indeed, she is the paragon of all that Jerome prescribes: 'I have partially reiterated these things...wisely enjoined by Jerome for girls and virgins that they may live well and blessedly; the observance of which (*quorumque observatio*), as I have said, occurs properly [...] in noone as in the little Virgin Mary'.<sup>13</sup> Since the word *observatio* connotes observance, but also observation, Canisius is asserting that she

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 99. On Canisius as a reader of Jerome, specifically of his letters, see Meuwese A., "De uitgave van Hieronymus' brieven door Petrus Canisius", *Historisch tijdschrift* 4 (1925) 1–25; Lössl J., "Konfessionelle Theologie und humanistisches Erbe: Zur Hieronymusbriefedition des Petrus Canisius", in Berndt R. (ed.), *Petrus Canisius SJ (1521–1597): Humanist und Europäer* (Berlin: 2000) 121–153; and Pabel H.M., "Peter Canisius as a Catholic Editor of a Catholic St. Jerome", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 96 (2005) 171–197. As Pabel shows, Canisius's popular anthology of the letters, first printed in 1562, contains an extensive and explicitly confessionalized paratextual apparatus, that connects it to other patristic anthologies, such as the *Confessio Augustiniana* (1567), *Confessio Ambrosiana* (1580), and *Confessio Hieronymiana* (1585), that enlist the Fathers to combat the Protestant heresy. On the related issue of Canisius's confessional reading Saint Augustine, see Pabel H.M., "Augustine's *Confessions* and the Autobiographies of Peter Canisius, S.J.", *Church History and Religious Culture* 87 (2007) 453–475. On Jesuit patristics as an instrument of confessional theology, see Sieben H.J., S.J., "Von der Kontroverstheologie zur Zusammenarbeit in der *Res publica literaria* (1546–1643). Jesuitenpatristik von Petrus Canisius bis Fronton du Duc", in Berndt (ed.), *Petrus Canisius* 169–201; and on the complementary issue of the relation between humanist and Jesuit scholarship on the Fathers, see Bertrand D., "The Society of Jesus and the Church Fathers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in Backus I. (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols. (Leiden: 1997) 2:889–895; Rummel E., *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford: 2000), esp. 44–49; and with specific reference to Canisius, Rädle F., "Petrus Canisius Autor in seinem Verhältnis zum Humanismus", in Berndt (ed.), *Petrus Canisius SJ: Humanist und Europäer* 155–168.

<sup>12</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 99.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.: 'Haec ego carptum ex Hieronymo repetivi [...] quae sapienter ille puellis & virginibus ad bene beateque vivendum praescribit: quorumque observatio in aliam nullam, ut dixi, sicut in Mariam Virgunculam [...] proprie competit'.

is the visible embodiment – more precisely, the image – of Jerome's maidenly ideal. This image is what Canisius aims first and foremost to delineate, and so, he supplements Jerome by reference to the *revelationes* of Saint Bridget and of Mechthild of Magdeburg, paraphrasing the Marian visions they were privileged to behold.<sup>14</sup> These sources allow him to claim Mary's transparency of body and soul: 'She who was so great a care to the angels subjected her selfsame body to her soul, holding it in subjection, so that the one implicitly followed the other in all things, as if the soul were the body's mistress'.<sup>15</sup> This is why divine goodness permeated the Virgin's body, enabling it to exercise temperance in eating and drinking, in the holy vigils it kept, the balance it maintained between physical pleasure and displeasure and their causes.<sup>16</sup> So too, she tempered the loveliness (*venustas*) that made her delightful to all, with modesty of speech and gravity of gesture that curbed and overturned the lascivious and impure desires of those who beheld her (*quae spectantium lasciviam & impuram concupiscentiam facile reprimeret atque profligaret*).<sup>17</sup> Canisius is emphasizing that the Marian image he purveys, like the Virgin's body that was seen as the very image of her soul, allows us to bear witness to the action of the Holy Spirit coursing through her and fully reconciling her internal and external motions of body and soul. The gifts of the spirit become visible in her every glance, gesture, speech, bodily attitude, and motion (*in eiusdem incessu, sermone, gestu, oculis, totoque corporis habitu*), miraculously illuminating everyone privileged to behold the Virgin, Canisius avows in a paraphrase of Gallatinus aimed against anyone claiming otherwise.<sup>18</sup> In truth, she is unaffected by the struggle between body and soul that afflicts humankind, even the saints, impeding them from advancing in the way of the Lord (*itaque non illam vel pupugit, vel polluit illa spiritus carnisque colluctatio, quae vel invitos etiam iustos & quamlibet sanctos exercet*).<sup>19</sup> On this account, to view her without is to view her within: 'And so by degrees God prepares His chosen instruments, causing their youthful spirits, even from the first, to be rightly and religiously formed, that thereby from adolescence they may more fitly bear the divine yoke

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 101: 'Corpus ipsum, quod angelis magnae curae fuit sic animae subiecit, subiectumque tenuit, ut illi velut dominae per omnia obsecundaret'.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 102–103.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 103.

with which He most nobly graces their shoulders at a tender and delicate age'.<sup>20</sup> Implicit here is the notion that the soul is the image of God, which in certain exceptional cases He fashions into the exceedingly close likeness of Himself, so that the heavy weight of divine offices may be more patiently borne. Mary was thus shaped in the image of God more fully than any other human instrument, for as Canisius puts it, 'she more than any person enjoyed the singular and efficacious grace of the Supreme Creator'.<sup>21</sup> The image of Mary that Canisius aspires to represent, both verbally and pictorially, is the divine likeness made perfectly visible by her body and soul in concert, that together exemplify the heightened imitation of God.

Canisius readily admits that where Mary is concerned, he perforce supplements Scripture by recourse to the plausible conclusions of those authorities whom the Church sanctions, chief among them Jerome, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Nicephorus, and Cedrenus; more than this, he claims that tradition licenses the judicious use of the imagination, which furnishes matter beyond the scope of words: 'From which can easily be judged that the formation of this girl was excellent to the utmost degree, even if we nowhere read anything about it. For it is meet to observe in the education of Anna's very noble daughter [...] whatever the wise deem exigent on any account'.<sup>22</sup> Even where texts are available, images may provide the better testimony. Take the accounts of Mary's girlhood in the temple, composed by Cedrenus and Georgius Nicomediensis, both of whom affirm that she was nourished daily by angels. Canisius paraphrases Georgius, arguing that such a miracle exceeds the cognitive grasp of the rational mind; one must instead rely upon internal sight, for such things, being correlates to the mystery of the Incarnation, are ineffable, that is, not expressible verbally but rather to be evoked by images: 'But you, O man [...] hearing the admirable and singular account of the Virgin living in the temple, neither doubt nor examine with the

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 98: 'Sic electa sua organa paulatim praeparat Deus, ac pueriles illorum animos inde ab initio rite sancteque formandos curat, ut eo aptius ab adolescentia sua portent Dominicum iugum, quod illius tenerae ac mollis aetatis humeros pulcherrime cohonestat'.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.: 'ut si ullus unquam alius, Maria inprimis peculiari & efficaci summi Conditoris gratia frueretur'.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 99: 'Ex quibus de altero, quod dixi, iudicari facile potest, non vulgarem, sed excellentem & absolutam puellae huius institutionem fuisse, licet nihil de illa scriptum uspiam legeremus. Consentaneum est enim in hac tam nobili Annae filia educanda ad unguem observatum esse, quicquid sapientes [...] ratione ulla exigendum putarunt'.

rational intelligence (*ratione ea*) what cognition cannot grasp (*quae capere non potest cogitatio*). You see that selfsame Word of God having taken up residence ineffably (*modo ineffabili*) within her womb, and yet you ask whether that food truly consumed by Mary was material or immaterial. Seeing the Spirit overshadow her by consultation with the Father, do you still cast doubt on the ministry of angels?<sup>23</sup>

The Marian imagery that Canisius endorses, whether drawn from Scripture and the Fathers or from the sphere of imaginative decorum, derives ultimately from the Virgin herself, as he explains at length here and throughout the *Mariale*. She is a skilled maker of sacred images, which permeate her spiritual exercises, anchoring her daily practice of meditative and contemplative prayer. In other words, the images of Mary illustrated in the *Mariale* may be seen to correspond in kind with the images, both self-generated and revealed, that she utilized to engage fully in the devotional life. Canisius elegantly makes this point by juxtaposing two verses from the *Parthenice Mariana* of Baptista Mantuanus, that in turn complement the epigrammatic poem of Philippus Menzelius. Verse one describes Mary as a vigilant student of the patriarchs and prophets, Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah especially, and as an imitator of the Psalmist: she sedulously banishes her mind of idle cares, her days of sleep, resting not at all, while she learns the prophetic songs sung by King David (*carmina discebat, sanctique poemata Regis*).<sup>24</sup> Verse two describes her as an artificer, who 'paints wool with the needle, spins silken yarn, and weaves warp and weft into priestly veils'. (*Nunc lanam pingebat acu, nunc pensa trahebat/ Serica, & immissis per licia pendula filis/ Vela Sacerdotum sacros texebat in usus*).<sup>25</sup> Together these verses imply that her meditative prayers, fashioned after the psalms, in response to the prophets and patriarchs, attach to her art of sewing and weaving images. It is as if the works of her hands were prayerfully executed, and her prayers pictorially fabricated. Canisius further underscores the complementarity of both by observing that Mary both sings the psalms (*carmina discebat*) and sings while sewing (*ore sonans*).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 100: 'Tu autem ô homo [...] admirabilem & novam in templo vivendi rationem audiens Virginis, noli de eo dubitare: noli examinare ratione ea, quae capere non potest cogitatio. Vides ipsum Dei verbum modo ineffabili habitasse in eius utero: & contendes, fuerit ne alimentum, quo nempe Maria vinceretur, materiale, an expers materiae? Vides paterno consilio Spiritus in ea adumbrationem: & de ministerio angelorum dubitas?'

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

These verses develop earlier references to Mary's visualization of the psalms, which she values, along with all sacred codices, like other women prize gems and silks. Alone in her retiring room (*in cubiculo*), she strives to emulate the king's daughter praised in Psalm 44:14, whose glory is entirely from within (*omnis gloria eius filiae Regis ab intus*).<sup>26</sup> Following Jerome's precepts for the perfection of virginity, she saw then loved the Psalmist's glorious *filiam*, admiring this scriptural image of a woman whose every speech, bearing, and action of walking are an instruction in virtue. The *filia* bodies forth for Mary the meditative image of herself that she strives to fashion as an object of emulation; again following Jerome, she visualizes neither her past nor present, focusing instead on the image of perfection to be fulfilled in the future, when she like the king's daughter shall be glorified *ab intus*, having been chosen as the dwelling place of Christ (*nescita praeterita, fugiat praesentia, futura desideret*).<sup>27</sup> Further, within her sanctuary she was seen, or alternatively seemed to herself, to inhabit paradise and to walk with God, as if she were the living likeness of that earlier Mary (viz., Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron) who sang praises to the Lord, showing herself as an exemplar to the Israelite women, after the crossing of the Red Sea (*ut in Paradiso sibi quodammodo vivere, & sola cum solo Deo suo ambulare videretur, non dissimilis priori Mariae*).<sup>28</sup> As Miriam, Canisius implies, is a type or similitude of Mary, so she delights in viewing herself as the image of this prototype, the companion of God who walks with Him in paradise, thus furnishing us, as did Miriam her people, with an exemplar to be seen and imitated. This reference to Exodus 15:20–21 complements other allusions to Mary's close and fervent study of Scripture, and especially of those passages describing the many admirable gifts and miracles conferred by God on His chosen people, not least His promise that the God of Israel would be born of a Virgin, as Savior of the world. The Virgin, having more perfectly recognized these things by sight (*quum vero perfectius agnosceret*), resolves entirely to withdraw herself from the eyes of her parents and friends (*tum a parentum, tum ab amicorum conspectu [...] sese subduxit*), the better to reflect on the fact that she is beheld by God her Creator, the spectator and judge of all life, upon whose act of beholding she must meditate

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

internally (*ut Deum suum creatorem, ac omnis vitae spectatorem & iudicem intelligeret*).<sup>29</sup> Single-minded prayer of this sort requires that she recollect the image of her every word and deed, evaluating its effect upon God, thus ensuring that she has committed no offense in His eyes; she also begs to live in the time of the Messiah's presence (*ut praesentis Messiae tempore vivere*), the term *praesens* implying a face-to-face encounter.<sup>30</sup> Her image-making faculty having been honed by spiritual exercise, she eschews temporal benefits and instead contemplates divine rewards: 'To such an extent was that sublime spirit continually contemplating (*subinde contemplabatur*) the rewards bestowed on the saved in heaven, which she preferred far more than any earthly riches, inasmuch as she saw and foresaw with a perspicaciously sharp mind (*claro mentis acumine providens atque perspicens*) how greatly true spiritual glory surpasses the pomp and splendor of the whole world'.<sup>31</sup>

Canisius infers that our image of the Virgin, like her image of herself, may be accessed solely through meditative and contemplative prayer, of which icons like the *Pulcherrima Virgo* are facilitative instruments [Fig. 5]. He compels us to view this icon as a portrait of the prayerful Virgin, who scrupulously embraced the contemplative life, choosing it as the best part (*partemque optimam electam studiosissime conservaret*), having devoted herself from infancy to seeing and tasting the goodness of God (*ut summo aeterno bono inde a primis annis intente vacaret, & vacando videret simul & gustaret*).<sup>32</sup> The stilled effigy with heavy-lidded eyes and somnolent gaze may be seen as the paragon of contemplative rigor that leaves its practitioners as if blind, dumb, or seemingly asleep (*surdi, coeci [...] adeoque dormientes esse videantur*), even while spiritually journeying in divine pilgrimage (*mirabiliter peregrinantur*).<sup>33</sup> Such contemplatives, among whom none was more adept than Mary, appear inactive when in fact their spiritual eyes are vigilantly trained on God: 'In the meantime they remain vigilant, keeping vigil with God and engaging in divine contemplation, attentive to nothing worldly, hardly even to themselves, while their spirit, as if severed from their body and

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 101–102: 'Quid sublimis ille animus, qui parata iustis in coelis praemia subinde contemplabatur, ac divitiis temporariis omnibus longe anteponebat? Utpote claro mentis acumine providens atque perspicens, quanto demum intervallo totius mundi pompam & splendorem vera spiritualisque gloria superaret'.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

conjoined with God, wonderfully peregrinates'.<sup>34</sup> Seen in this light, the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, precisely because she seems so still and drowsy, requires to be construed, that is, imagined in our mind's eye, as active and vigilant. The scintillant aureole that seems to disperse the banks of cloud, along with the circling hatches and crosshatches that enliven her features and drapery, evoke the mobility of spirit underlying her stillness and solitude. The heavenly radiance and clouds confirm that she is contemplatively united with God (*cum Deo coniunct[a]*), while also recalling that she was overshadowed by the Lord and illuminated by the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation. Her curiously bifocal eyes, the one looking down, the other up, perhaps allude to Gallatinus's image of the Virgin, endorsed by Canisius, her gaze habitually fixed on the ground, regarding nothing but spiritual matters, yet rising heavenward when she prays (*imo ut oculos nunquam elevarit [...] sed semper nisi Deum oraret, humi defixos tenuerit*).<sup>35</sup> Her physical beauty reminds us that Albertus Magnus describes Mary as lovelier than the prototypes – Esther, Judith, Rachel, and Rebecca – who represented her (*Mariae typum exprimentibus*); Canisius adds that as Christ was most beautiful among the sons of men, so Mary surpassed all women in natural beauty (*operante natura*), which consists in bodily measurement, elegant disposition and proportion of the limbs, and attractive coloring (*deinde in eleganti membrorum dispositione & proportione, postremo in coloris venustate consistit*).<sup>36</sup> The elaborate veil overlain with a mantling shroud underscores Canisius's oft-made point, that Mary, beautiful as she was, relished seclusion, desiring to be seen by God alone.<sup>37</sup> Her thoughtful expression, alertly watchful eyes, and internalizing gaze, illustrate what Canisius, following Luke 2:19, commends as her foremost attribute – her ability to conserve all she has perceived and to bear the exact likeness of these things in her heart (*non alia de re magis a Luca commendatur, quam quod omnia quae acciderent, sedulo, more suo videlicet, conservaret, & in corde suo accurate conferret*).<sup>38</sup> The elements that invite us to see the icon as a visionary image – the intensely brilliant light revealing and irradiating the Virgin from amidst billowing heavenly clouds – can also be interpreted as a

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.: 'Vigilant interea, sed Deo vigilant, divinaeque contemplationi, nulla mundi, sed vix etiam sui ratione habita, dum animus velut a corpore seiunctus, & cum Deo coniunctus, mirabiliter peregrinatur'.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 101, 104, 109.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 103.



further attribute that alludes to one of her signal privileges; as Canisius animadverts, this time following Rupert of Deutz: 'God surely in no wise denied Mary, most holy, wise, and dear, the divine visions and celestial revelations that He miraculously disclosed to Paul, previously a blasphemer and enemy of the Church'.<sup>39</sup> The inscribed plaque, fully coordinated with the lighting scheme, serves to emphasize the artifice of this sacred image, attaching it to the argument of Canisius's text and embedding it within an emblematic construct comprised by the *imago*, the *inscriptio*, and Menzelius's epigrammatic *poëma*. The *Pulcherrima Virgo*, in other words, is not so much a visionary image; rather, it is an explicitly pictorial image of the contemplative Virgin, upon whose beauty of body and soul, mnemonic and imaginative faculties, privileged access to visions, and visual method of prayer, Canisius prompts us to reflect by way of the icon. Our view of Mary and the delight and consolation we draw from such a view, perforce derive from this meditative image that issues, as Canisius has made abundantly clear, from Holy Writ, the Fathers, and the process of sacred image-making; this process is licensed by the plausible hypothesis, again deriving from the Fathers, that Mary prayed in and through images, representing herself in the form of Old Testament types, such as Miriam and the Psalmist's *filia*, and visualizing the divine mysteries prophesied, fulfilled, and yet to come, in which she plays a crucial part. I shall turn shortly to one such mystery, the Annunciation, the Marian image of which Canisius richly expounds in a discussion of what constitutes a scriptural image.

First, however, I want to pose a question about the kind of mental images Canisius approves, and connected to this, the nature of the relation he posits between such images and the pictorial image. He approaches this issue by reference to key passages in Ambrose's *Homilia in 4. Matthaei* (*Homilies on Matthew 4*) and *Homilia in Domini Hypapante* (*Homilies on the Presentation of the Lord*). He considers Ambrose exemplary because he more than the other Fathers esteems the Virgin's life as an image of virtue and source of universal moral instruction (*virtutis formam, omniumque disciplinam appellat*), calling it the shining sanctum of modesty, the ensign of faith, and the discipline of devotion (*in qua*

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: 'Certe quod ad visiones divinas & coelestes revelationes attinet, quales Paulo licet ante blasphemio, & Ecclesiae persecutori Deus mirabiliter patefecit, eas tam sanctae, tam sapienti, tam dilectae matri haudquaquam denegavit'.

*secretum verecundiae, vexillum fidei, devotionis obsequium mirabiliter fulserint*).<sup>40</sup> The image of Mary he portrays, in the sense of 'exposes to view', is exceptionally perspicuous (*Mariae vitam quomodo Patres subinde nobis proponant, & imprimis Ambrosius*): 'The Virgin, he says, was in neither body nor mind the sort of person who adulterates sincere affection with the false show of deception: humble in heart, grave in speech, prudent in spirit, sparing of words, and most attentive to reading, she placed her trust not in the uncertainty of riches but in the poor man's entreaty; intent on labor, modest in conversation, she was wont to search not for men but for God, the mind's eyewitness, the soul's judge (*arbitrum mentis solita non hominem, sed Deum quaerere*)'.<sup>41</sup> The lengthy description continues in this vein, amplifying the image of Mary that Ambrose instills, as a votaress who conceives indeed visualizes herself as an image divinely seen and appraised: 'Nothing stern in her eyes, nothing insolent in her speech, nothing impudent in her actions, nor was she weak in her steps, free in her gait, or petulant in her voice'.<sup>42</sup> Ambrose, then, is the source of Canisius's conception of Mary as a paradigm of pious self-imaging, and he concludes, still paraphrasing his estimable source, with the assertion that she represents the perfected image of humankind: 'That selfsame Virgin was the body's likeness, the mind's semblance, the very image of probity (*ut ipsa corporis species simulachrum fuerit mentis, figura probitatis*)'.<sup>43</sup> This same sentence might also be read as a statement of the Virgin's transparency of body and soul, as follows: 'That likeness of the body was the very semblance of the mind, the image of probity'. Howsoever one translates the sentence, it constitutes an epitome of the notion that she is best known as a visual image: in one reading, she herself represents in body and in mind the very image of virtue; in another, her body itself represents the image of her mind as the image of virtue. This verbal-visual construction affirms the semiotic convergence of *species*, *simulachrum*, and *figura* in the person of Mary. Ambrose then folds these terms for *imago* into a telling figura-

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.: 'Virgo erat non solum corpore, inquit, sed etiam mente, quae nullo doli ambitu sincerum adulteraret affectum: corde humilis, verbis gravis, animi prudens, loquendi parcius, legendi studiosior, non in incerto divitiarum, sed in prece pauperis spem reponens: intenta operi, verecunda sermone, arbitrum mentis solita non hominem, sed Deum quaerere'.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 105–106: 'Nihil torvum in oculis, nihil in verbis procas, nihil in actu inverecundum, non gressus fractior, non incessus solutior, non vox petulantior'.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 106.

tive image of her power to represent outside, or more precisely, upon herself, what is within. She is the vestibule that reveals the goodness of the house (*bona quippe domus in ipso vestibulos debet agnosci*), that is to say, she represents, in the sense of makes visibly apparent, all that she contains, teaching by visible example how life must best be lived (*ut unius vita omnium sit disciplina*), and fulfilling all the 'offices of virtue' (*omniaque demum virtutis impleverit officia, ut non tam disceret quam doceret*).<sup>44</sup>

Canisius now grafts Jerome onto Ambrose, surmising that this is why he held Mary forth to all virgins as a mirror for contemplation (*veluti speculum virginibus omnibus contemplandum praebet*), urging them to place her before their eyes and to think of her purity, that moved God to select her to be mother of the Lord (*propone tibi beatam Mariam, quae tanti exstitit puritatis, ut mater Domini esse mereretur*).<sup>45</sup> Mary is the supreme *speculum virginitatis*, since she herself speculates so effectively on the image of Christ, focusing on Him with the eyes of the spirit and the flesh. Canisius relies on Jerome and Peter Damian to make this point. According to Jerome, when the Virgin indulges in holy *otium* and devotes herself to contemplation, she most serenely abides with Him whom the angels desire to behold (*sola ut cum solo in quem desiderant Angeli prospicere, quietissime versaretur*).<sup>46</sup> Through contemplative prayer, Jerome implies, she expresses the angelic longing to see Christ. The more fully she withdraws from worldly affairs and concerns, the more fully she transforms herself into the image of Christ, conforming to the divine revelations and sacred contemplations she was accustomed always to receive, conserve, and cultivate (*ac tanto quidem illa divinis revelationibus sacrisque contemplationibus erat aptior, quanto plenius mundi curis ac negotiis sese omnibus abdicarat [...] quam citra conversiam constat, a primis infantiae pueritiaeque suae annis non solum accepisse, sed & conservasse, & excoluisse summa summi Dei munera*).<sup>47</sup> 'What could be more felicitous than Mary', Canisius concludes, 'who wheresoever she was, set before her eyes the eternal Godhead fit to be contemplated (*sempiternum illud numen ob oculos sibi contemplandum proponere*), inwardly revered its immense majesty, perpetually adored the Father in spirit and truth, imagined and preserved in her pure and holy heart only what was innocent and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

divine.<sup>48</sup> If contemplation entails the viewing of divine images, so too does the active terrestrial life of the Virgin, as Peter Damian asserts in the *Sermo 3. de Mariae nativitate* (*Third Sermon on the Nativity of Mary*): she perfectly reconciles the active and contemplative lives, for having been exalted by the dignity of contemplation, she yet fixes her bodily eyes on the substance of God Himself – viz., on Christ Jesus – embracing and supporting Him, being embraced and supported by Him, in fulfillment of Canticle 2:6: ‘His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me’.<sup>49</sup> Peter Damian commands us to contemplate this truth: ‘Look attentively, he says, for it is she herself who, having been transported by the sweetness of contemplative excellence, fixed her ever more perspicuous eyes on the substance of God Himself (*in ipsius Dei substantiam lucidiores infixit obtutus*)’.<sup>50</sup> As deployed by Canisius, Peter Damian would seem to be arguing that Mary, who in life saw Christ incarnate and in spirit saw the image of Christ, perfectly unites the active and contemplative ideals of Christian piety. In turn, it is the devout skill with which she sees and envisions, that makes her infinitely worthy of our imitation and contemplative attention. Appreciated in these terms, she jointly embodies the perfections of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, as Gregorius Nicomediensis declares: ‘since she had due and holy care for divine matters, yet did not disdain human affairs, she was as one who embraces both the offices of Mary and Martha’.<sup>51</sup> Peter Damian further explains that devoutly to imagine Mary is to see the full spectrum of image types available to the eyes: we may visualize her as a living person, but also as a scriptural type, making use of such similes, metonyms, or metaphors as the lily shining among thorns from Canticle 2:2, as well as the corollary images they license us to imagine: ‘Like the lily among thorns, so the most blessed Virgin shone forth among the daughters born from the thorny race of the Jews, glowed brightly white in cleanly chastity of the body,

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 104: ‘Quid vero Maria felicius, quae ubicunque degeret, sempiternum illud numen ob oculos sibi contemplandum proponere, tantam maiestatem intime revereri, Patrem in spiritu & veritate semper adorare, nihil nisi purum & divinum puro illo sanctoque pectore concipere atque conservare?’

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 108: ‘Laeva eius, inquit, sub capite meo, & dextera eius amplexabitur me’.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.: ‘Considera, inquit, quia ipsa est, quae in contemplativae dignitatis super-  
vecta dulcedine, in ipsius Dei substantiam lucidiores infixit obtutus’.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 101: ‘ita ut quum rite sancteque coelestia curaret, humana tamen non despiceret, utrunque munus Marthae & Magdalenae complexa’.

yet blazed in mind with the twofold ardor of charity (viz., *amor Dei* and *amor proximi*), and burned everywhere with the fragrance of good works, tending toward sublime things by the continual inclination of her heart'.<sup>52</sup>

*Species, simulachrum, figura, speculum, exemplum*, and *imago*, the Virgin represents the mobilization of these images in action and contemplation. For Canisius, these kinds and degrees of image, and the action of image-making they connote, derive ultimately from the paradigm of the pictorial image, as becomes evident from his anchoring of Epiphanius's and Cedrenus's verbal portraits of Mary in the archetype painted by Saint Luke, a true copy of which, he avers, may be seen in Venice in the collection of the great painter Titian.<sup>53</sup> Canisius first enumerates the features elaborated by Epiphanius in his account of Mary's form, stature, and conduct (*de Virginis moribus, sed etiam de modo formae & staturae eius repetita est in hunc modum*): she was of middling height, her complexion the color of wheat, her hair reddish yellow, her eyes piercing, the pupils yellowish like an [unripe] olive, her eyebrows curving and becomingly dark, her nose rather long, her lips blooming, her face neither round nor pointed, but longish, her hands and fingers likewise elongated, her clothing natural in color; exceedingly affable, she was at the same time honorable and grave in everything she did, showing respect and goodwill toward all, being totally without scorn, irascibility, or perturbation of the passions, etc.<sup>54</sup> Canisius then analyzes one detail in this sequence: whereas the Latin translation after Epiphanius describes the young Mary as frank yet decorous in conversation with all men (*decenti dicendi libertate adversus omnes homines usa est*), the Greek original states simply that there was no boldness in her speech (*in loquendo cum aliis audaciam illi defuisse*).<sup>55</sup> Canisius's point is that the verbal record consists of plausible, albeit authoritative,

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 108: 'Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias. Sicut .n. lilium inter spinas, sic beatissima Virgo Maria enituit inter, filias quae de spinosa propagine Iudaeorum nata, candescebat mundicia virgineae castitatis in corpore, flammescebat autem ardore gemine charitatis in mente, flagrabat passim odore boni operis, tendebat ad sublimia intentione continua cordis'.

<sup>53</sup> On the veneration of Lucan icons of the Virgin after the Council of Trent, with specific reference to Canisius's defense of such images, see Bacci M., *Il pennello dell'Evangelista: Storia delle immagini sacre attribuite a san Luca* (Pisa: 1998) 336–37, 344, 363. As Bacci observes, Canisius identifies only two Marian images – the icons in Santa Maria Maggiore and Santi Domenico e Sisto – as true paintings by Saint Luke.

<sup>54</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 107.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

rather than verifiably true elements. He reiterates this point, using Ambrose, Cedrenus, and Anselm to corroborate Epiphanius. Cedrenus, for instance, describes the Virgin as dark in complexion (*subfusca*), although Epiphanius calls her light (*colore triticum referente*); and Anselm, whose account agrees ‘not badly’ with those of Ambrose, Epiphanius, and Cedrenus, characterizes her eyes as dark-colored (*fuscus*).<sup>56</sup> That these accounts, though they vary in some details, for the most part correspond, serves to demonstrate that the Fathers have fashioned an image of the Virgin that is reliable, consistent, and trustworthy. Their commendably simple words (*verbis quidem simplicibus*) contain the ‘many splendid, praiseworthy, and most rare ornaments of virtue that all posterity admires in this Virgin, but never sufficiently imitates’.<sup>57</sup> But the Lucan icon, originally painted after the life, copied by an unknown master, and now residing with Titian, constitutes the primary source of Canisius’s conviction that a relatively stable image of the Virgin is available. Marian imagery, both seen and imagined, may be situated along the continuous spectrum linking this pictorial image to the verbal images Canisius cites. All together, these sources offer a retrievable, adaptable, and plausibly veridical image, for they testify to the fact that the Fathers, and with them Canisius, have collectively aspired to paint a consistent portrait of the Virgin, that may be circulated among the faithful, as a spur to the meditative life: ‘Meanwhile, there are trustworthy witnesses acquainted with Titian, the most famous painter of our age, who say that an exemplar of the sacred picture painted after the archetype of Luke the evangelist, exists at his house in Venice (*exemplar sacrae picturae ex archetypo Lucae Evangelistae*). However that may be, in that [picture] are seen all those distinctive features portrayed not only by Epiphanius, but also by Nicephorus, whom we previously mentioned (*spectantur omnes illae notae, quas non solum Epiphanius, sed & Nicephorus iam a nobis commemoratus expressit*)’.<sup>58</sup> This picture serves to confirm, perhaps even to authorize, the verbal tradition, whose descriptions of Mary, Canisius ratifies as salutary by common consent:

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.: ‘vero rarissima, & singulari tamen commendatione digna continent ornamenta virtutum, quae tota posteritas in hac Virgine simul & admiretur, & nunquam satis imitetur’.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.: ‘Sunt interim fide digni testes, qui Venetiis noverint Titianum pictorem nostro seculo celebratissimum, apud quem extare dicunt exemplar sacrae picturae ex archetypo Lucae Evangelistae, ut arbitrantur, exceptum: Caeterum in eo spectantur omnes illae notae, quas non solum Epiphanius, sed & Nicephorus iam a nobis commemoratus expressit’.

[...] even if these shall fail to please the pious, they shall certainly cause them no offense, inasmuch as they acknowledge the apostolic canon: "Examine all things and retain whatever is good". Let him who will, believe that these are fabricated (*haec commentitia esse*): let us make use of these and other accounts passed down as if by hand, and confirmed by the suffrage of men neither superficial nor unreliable, since placing faith in them may bear great fruit and harbors little danger, so that I truly affirm them to be all the more worthy of belief. That shall indeed transpire, if as best we can, we come to know the most august mother of our Lord and God, as if [she were] depicted on panel by means of these certain lines (*si ex his velut quibusdam lineis, augustissimam Domini & Dei nostri matrem, velut in tabella depictam utcunque cognoscamus*), and what is more, if we often set this image firmly before the eyes of the mind (*ac saepe quidem ob mentis oculos propositam habeamus*). For there exists an Ambrosian precept that may fitly be impressed not only upon all virgins, but all Christians: "Let the virginity and life of Mary be described as if in an image, whence as from [the surface of a] mirror the likeness, integrity, and form of virtue shine brightly (*sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariae, de qua velut in speculo refulget species, castitas & forma virtutis*)".<sup>59</sup>

Canisius appends the similar injunction of Sophronius, who compares Mary to the mirror image of the form of virtue, in which are exemplified all the teachings of chastity and probity (*in qua velut in speculo refulget forma virtutis*).<sup>60</sup> Even during her life, Canisius notes, Mary was beheld as an object of pilgrimage, at whom the disciples of Christ would gaze reverently and admiringly, as if staring at a celestial prodigy or sacred spectacle (*eam velut coeleste prodigium, sacrumque spectaculum reverenter invisere*).<sup>61</sup> The references to pictorial means and ends scattered throughout these passages – to lines depicted, or more precisely, delineated (*depictam*), to a panel or tablet painted or drawn upon (*tabella*), to the act of impressing or imprinting (*inculcari*) – compel the

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 107–108: 'at pios tamen multos si non oblectabunt, certe non offendunt, utpote quum Canonem norint Apostolicum: Omnia probate: quod bonum est tenete. Credat qui volet, haec commentitia esse: ego vero tanto magis credenda dixerim, quo ipsorum fides minus habet periculi, quoque fructus maior potest consequi, si iis aliisque narrationibus veluti per manus traditis, nec vanorum ac levium hominum suffragio corroboratis, convenienter utamur. Id vero fiet, si ex his velut quibusdam lineis, augustissimam Domini & Dei nostri matrem, velut in tabella depictam utcunque cognoscamus, ac saepe quidem ob mentis oculos propositam habeamus. Extat enim Ambrosianum praeceptum, quod non modo Virginibus, sed & Christianis omnibus recte inculcari potest: Sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta virginitas vitaque Mariae, de qua velut in speculo refulget species, castitas & forma virtutis'.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

reader-viewer to attach Canisius's comments to the woodcut illustration of the *Pulcherrima Virgo*, that he implicitly identifies as a plausible *commentitium* – a devised, fabricated, or imagined artifact – no less worthy of use than the Marian image painted by Saint Luke, the rhetorical images generated by the Fathers, or the contemplative images manufactured by the Virgin as devotional instruments. Conversely, the folio-size print, inscribed like an ex-voto (another meaning of the term *tabella*), its every line clearly visible (*ex his velut quibusdam lineis*), confronts us with an image of Mary (*praepositam habeamus*) as *coeleste prodigium* and *sacrum spectaculum*, that perfectly accords with the exemplary visual image(s) propounded by Canisius.

It is important to note that Canisius uses the terms *contemplatio* and *contemplari* to signify meditation based on images. He is of course cognizant of the more specific definition of contemplation as the highest register of mystical devotion that seamlessly unites the passive votary with the love of God. For example, he mentions in passing that Mary, no less than the Psalmist, was capable of seeing the indivisible and invisible Word of God, thereby transcending all intellectual visions (*super omnes visiones intellectuales ipsa unum illud invisibile videt*): 'Higher than the prophets, more elevated than the Magdalene, she sees and saw, tastes and tasted with a sober palate the one fountain of life, Him who is the one Good after whom all things strive'.<sup>62</sup> The crucial reference to Titian's Lucan icon, however, along with the portraits of Mary drawn from Scripture and the Fathers, clearly indicates that he has in mind a contemplative practice modeled after pictorial images – painted, drawn, and printed – that are imagined as if they were pictures being actually beheld.

Let us turn now to the scriptural image of the *Annunciation* that introduces Book III on the mystery of the Incarnation [Fig. 6]. Whereas the *Pulcherrima Virgo* is an icon of Mary that represents her as the epitome of Marian contemplation, the *Annunciation* is a scriptural image that narrates the sacred event recounted in Luke 1:26–38, consisting of the angelic salutation and colloquy and the Virgin's query and assent. I want to ask, first, how Canisius encourages us to read the picture as an exegetical lens onto Scripture; and second, how the pictorial image

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 109: 'merito ipsa quanto altior omnibus Prophetis, tanto perfectius videt, vidit, gustat & gustavit ipsum, apud quem est fons boni, qui solus est hoc unum bonum, quod omnia appetunt'.



comes to stand for the role played by images in the mystery of the Incarnation? The collateral poem by Philippus Menzelius, *In sequentem effigiem carmen* (*Song on the Subsequent Image*), leads the way, describing the *Annunciation* as one of the *pharmaca* (remedies) gathered by Canisius for our benefit from his reading of a thousand sacred texts, as also from his viewing of ancestral exempla (*sunt nobis pharmaca contra/ Mille sacris decerpta libris, veterumque parentum/ Congesta auspiciis*). Having seen and read these sources at length, Canisius now ingenuously offers us these assembled citations (*quae lecta Canisius offert/ Et spectata diu. Nulla hic sunt toxica fraudi*).<sup>63</sup> For Menzelius, then, the *Mariale* operates equally through its words and images, woven together, like a commonplace book, from multifarious verbal and visual authorities; this conviction justifies his complex sense of what it is that the pictured *Annunciation* reveals. Treating the image as the event itself, the poet apostrophizes the angelic messenger, as if he were seeing the angelic salutation with his own eyes, in the present time of Mary and Gabriel. 'O winged heavenly youth', he asseverates, 'at last you are boldly come, awaited by the pious who, banished into deepest darkness, prayed and longed eagerly to gaze at the news you now convey earthward as the messenger of the gods, sent down from Olympus (*Aliger ô coeli iuvenum fortissime, tandem/ Expectatus ades, quibus, heu, quantisque piorum/ Et votis, & desiderijs, dum nocte sub ima/ Extorres inhiant, quae tu demissus Olympo/ Nuncia iam ter-ris Superum caducifer affers*)'.<sup>64</sup> The term *inhiare* (to gaze at eagerly, regard with longing, or attend closely to) strongly implies that what we see here transpiring fulfills the proleptic image of the long-awaited event, harbored patiently and desirously by those votaries who fashioned that image while praying continually for salvation. Upon this prayerful image of the future, foreseen from the past, Canisius superimposes two further images, both retrospective: he refers to Elizabeth's song of praise, that recalls the *Annunciation* and affirms that the divine promises delivered by the angel will all come to pass (*quod praesaga futuri Helisabe cecinit*); and he expresses belief in the importance of the *Angelus*, the memorial prayer recited three times daily, that reenvisages and reenacts the *Annunciation* (*te verbis imitati: & ter tua dicta, piaequ*

<sup>63</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 233. Although this subsection of my paper expounds the revised image of the *Annunciation* to be found in the 1583 edition, my text references to Menzel's poem and to Book III, chapters 1 and 15, are taken from the earlier edition of 1577, which here differs only slightly from the later.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

*Helisabes grato depromere pectore avemus*).<sup>65</sup> Menzelius layers these various prayers onto the *Annunciation*, viewing it from several temporal perspectives that converge in the sacred event, the pictorial image of which is seen by turns to anticipate the future from a point in the past, commemorate the recent past, or imitate the past in the present. The print, rather than merely illustrating this event, evokes the full scope of the mystery of the Incarnation – the coming into flesh of the divine Word – that encompasses the past, present, and future of salvation history. Or rather, the print functions as a meditative lens onto this mystery, whose nature and meaning may be glimpsed through the pictorial image that constitutes one of the *spectata* (things viewed) promulgated by Canisius for our use. How this image articulates with the *lecta* set forth in Book III is the topic we must now address.

The *Annunciation* represents the starting-point where any systematic account of this Gospel story must commence, as Canisius states at the outset of chapter 1, “On the Two Persons (the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary) Chiefly to be Observed in the Angelic Salutation, and What One to One He Began to Say to [Mary] Fit to be Haïled”: ‘With a view to speaking, as they commonly say, about the angelic salutation, we should begin from evangelical history, whatsoever the treatment or argument, and so we shall consider the person saluting, namely, Gabriel, and the person saluted, namely, the Virgin, in that same vestibule’.<sup>66</sup> He repeats this injunction midway through the chapter, insisting that consideration of the Gospels must start from a systematic account of persons (*ad totam historiam recte cognoscendam, utriusque personae, sicut in caeteris dialogismis, salutantis Angeli & salutatae Virginis rationem imprimis haberi oportere*).<sup>67</sup> The print supplies the essential features Canisius requires to make his case, and moreover, precisely since it is a pictorial image, knowable by visual experience, the *Annunciation* counters the anti-Marian heresies of those sectarians who strive to diminish the dignity of the Virgin, not least by opposing any appeal to the eyes as instruments of faith. As such, the prayer of salutation, *Ave*

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> “De duabus personis (Gabriele Archangelo & Maria Virgine) in Angelica salutatione primum observandis, & quod ille sit solus ad solam salutandam ingressus”, in *ibid.*, 235: ‘De angelica salutatione dicturi, ut vulgaris loquendi mos obtinet, tractationem & velitationem omnem ab historia Evangelica ordiemur, ideoque personam utramque salutantem nempe Gabrielem & salutatam Virginem, in ipso vestibulo expendemus’.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 237.

*Maria*, and by implication, this image that the prayer evokes, are like a stake driven into the eyes of the Church's adversaries (*tantum ea non est sudes in oculis adversariorum*).<sup>68</sup> Canisius characterizes them as contrarians, 'who pervert everything in Scripture, habitually converting white into black (*nihil non in sacris literis depravantium, ut more suo vel candida in atra convertant*)'.<sup>69</sup> The *Annunciation* anchors his opposing view, for as he now explains, the mystery at issue, more specifically its protagonists, can best be understood in mimetic terms.

Take the angel Gabriel: his very name, since it signifies 'fortitude, or divine virtue' (*Dei virtus aut fortitudo*) represents nominally what Christ bodies forth substantially at the Incarnation (*qui hunc Angelus fortitudinem nuncupative: Christum autem sic etiam substantive dici non perperam admonet*).<sup>70</sup> Canisius paraphrases Jerome's *Liber de nominibus Hebraicis* and Bernard's *Homilia de laudibus Virginis*, further invoking the Synod of Ephesus to argue that Gabriel signifies 'God and man' (*Geber enim homo, El Deus*); on this basis, he claims that the angel's name also represents the nature of the miracle he has come to announce, distilling the meaning of his message (*nomine ipso significans, nuncium, quem apportat: quoniam is, quem Evangelizat, Christus Deus & homo erat oriturus, nomenclatura ipsa miraculum significat*).<sup>71</sup> Canisius emphasizes that these etymologies have a visual force that redound upon the image of the *Annunciation*: he incorporates Chrysostom's assertion in the *Homilia de incomprehensibili Dei natura*, that painters delineate Gabriel as winged, representing him to us in this way (*volitantem illum a pictoribus delineari nobisque representari*), not because God actually fashioned the archangel with wings, but rather, to suggest the sublime powers of his heavenly nature, and to make us reflect gratefully upon his transit from heaven to earth on our behalf (*atque ut illum e supremo domicilio [...] ad terram nostra causa devenisse, gratis animis reputemus*).<sup>72</sup> Other Fathers are marshaled to bolster this claim: Jerome on Gabriel's visible figure and form that made him look like a man when he spoke with the Virgin (*Gabrieli cum Virgine colloquente aspectabilem viri figuram formamque fuisse*); Ambrose on his descent in the human semblance of maleness foreign to the angels

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.: 'Igitur quae salutatio Catholicis gaudium & solatium adferre consuevit, tantum ea non est sudes in oculis adversariorum, nihil non in sacris literis depravantium, ut more suo vel candida in atra convertant'.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 235–236.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

(*illum in forma viri descendisse, aut sexus virilis speciem peregrinam*); Augustine on his brightly rubicund face, glittering vesture, and spectacular entry, aspects of the archangel's appearance calculated to inspire awe (*hunc Archangelum facie rutilante, veste corruscante, ingressu mirabili, aspectu terribili apparuisse*); John Damascene on his change into the form deemed suitable by God for the revelation of divine mysteries to men (*transformantur Angeli, quomodocunque Dominator iusserit Deus, & sic hominibus apparent, ac divina revelant mysteria*).<sup>73</sup> (In chapter 13 of Book III, "Mary's Evident and Principal Privilege of Praise Is that She Is the True and Natural Mother of Christ God and Man, just as the Fathers and Even Certain Adversaries Acknowledge", Canisius returns to this theme, drawing the conclusion that angels, though they have neither flesh nor human nature, abide with us in the image of men (*multisque aliis sub humana specie apparuerint, humanoque more fuerint cum illis versati*); and so, they appeared to Abraham, Lot, Daniel, Zachary, and others, one having been seen to take food with Tobias, another to wrestle with Jacob at night.)<sup>74</sup> He tells us that their visible form (*angelorum aspectus*) is malleable, for they may also appear fearsome, striking terror into human hearts and rendering men incapable of thought or speech, as occurred to Daniel and Zachary, among others (*tantum horroris incussit, praesenti ut vix animo esse, & recte cogitare ac loqui quicquam possent*).<sup>75</sup> His specific point is that the mystery of the Incarnation is truly distinctive, for God actually fashioned the body of Christ from the Virgin's body, whereas He could have manipulated other elements into the merely human image of Christ, just as angels appear in the likeness of men and yet are not begotten by a father or mother. His broader point is that the Annunciation involves an angelic image, which Mary beholds, interrogates, and interprets. This image is food for thought; it prompts thought and speech. The *Annunciation* print therefore consists of an image of the Virgin juxtaposed to an image of the image of Gabriel, sent by God to edify and inspire her, to promote meditative prayer and divine colloquy, and most importantly, to secure her consent and conversion into the mother of God [Fig. 6].

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 237–238.

<sup>74</sup> "Illustrem ac primariam Mariae laudem praerogativam esse, quod Christi Dei & hominis vera & naturalis Mater existat, sicut non veteres modo, sed etiam ex adversariis quidam profitentur", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 317.

<sup>75</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 238.

If Gabriel is construed as an image, so too is Mary, as Canisius emphasizes when he states in chapter 1 of Book III that Gabriel could not but have delighted in the Virgin, whom he found to be the likeness of himself in virtue and virginity (*cognata sibi virtute virginitate non potuit ea non plurimum delectari*).<sup>76</sup> Citing Bernard, he compares their encounter to that between Rebecca and Abraham's elder servant in Genesis 24, viewing the Annunciation through the lens of this typological image: just as the provident Abraham sent his servant to find the most chaste and beautiful maid whom God had prepared for his son Isaac, so God sent Gabriel to find the Virgin, and just as the servant drank gladly from Rebecca's water jar, so Gabriel delighted in Mary's beauty of body and soul. On this account, the New Testament event does not so much fulfill the Old, as re-present it as a work of divine artifice – an *opus* especially dear to its maker: 'Indeed, what work could be contrived for God more dear, for us more salutary, for [Mary] more worthy, for all generations more admirable and in like manner desirable?'<sup>77</sup> Mary's response is likewise carefully fashioned: as Canisius puts it, her words were delayed so that she might calibrate thought to speech, with due gravity and wisdom (*ne mentem lingua praecurrat, in loquendo autem tam provida & circumspecta, eius ut orationem tum gravitatis, tum sapientiae plenam*).<sup>78</sup> As the image of Gabriel inspires the Virgin to thought and prayerful speech, so Canisius avows that his eyes are fixed on the images of Mary and the angel, that elicit contemplation: 'Nor can I restrain myself, with eyes focused on contemplation of both persons (*in utriusque personae contemplationem defixus*), from feeling and saying with Bernard: O Virgin, who even now lives angelically, what ought you to see in the angel?'<sup>79</sup>

Canisius contrasts his readiness to view the image of the *Annunciation* with Luther's virtual blindness – his inability to see what Luke so plainly reveals, namely, that the Virgin was studying Psalm 44:11, applying to herself its injunction to see and hear the excellence of Christ, when she caught sight of Gabriel (*ingressus Angelus ad eam* [...])

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 237: 'quod opus demum Deo gratius & magis salutare nobis, ipsa vero dignius, omnibusque saeculis admirabilius, iuxta & optabilius possit excogitari?'

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.: 'Neque me continere possum, quin & ego in utriusque personae contemplationem defixus, cum Bernardo eadem & sentiam & dicam: Quid in Angelum videas o Virgo, quum iam Angelice vivas?'

*sacris vacantem studiis, quod ad se quoque pertinere putaret divinum oraculum: Audi filia, & vide, & inclina aurem tuam*).<sup>80</sup> Further, she was envisioning what prior visionaries had seen, 'rejoicing in the present integrity of a thousand eyewitnesses of good conscience' (*quum bonae conscientiae mille testium praesenti synceritate gauderet*), who had glimpsed what she was now privileged to behold.<sup>81</sup> The Annunciation, as Mary experiences it, aligns with this proleptic image and also with the regal image of the *filia* invoked in Psalm 44. For the viewer, then, the *Annunciation* calls to be experienced as an image of the Virgin's pious engagement with images [Fig. 6]. This is the true image that Canisius juxtaposes to the false image painted by Luther who, denying that the Virgin was engrossed in spiritual exercises (*ac sacris meditationibus & precibus operam daret*) when Gabriel appeared, alleges that she was neither alone nor praying at home.<sup>82</sup> Canisius refers to the image of Mary that Luther disseminates:

For Luther it is not enough to portray (*affingat*) her parents as obscure, their condition vile, their life all but sordid, abject, and contemptible: but now when she is visited by the angel, he depicts (*depingat*) her saying I know not what, or applying herself to some culinary or agrarian chore, so that surely in casting aspersion, he may seem rather to satisfy his libidinous desire, than to take account of virginal beauty, least that of so great a Virgin. And indeed, Ambrose suppresses this inane figment of Luther's imagination (*hoc inane Lutheri figmentum*), declaring perspicuously in more than one place: Alone in the inner rooms where noone might spy her, the angel found Mary.<sup>83</sup>

In this place, Ambrosius concludes, quoting a famous Stoic adage, she continually reflected on *bonas cogitationes*, seeming to herself in solitude least alone.<sup>84</sup> If Canisius is admonishing us to embrace the *Annunciation* print as a true image of the Virgin that does battle with the false

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 239: 'Haud illi satis est, quod illustri Virgini parentes obscuros, conditionem vilem, vitam tantum non sordidam, abiectam & despectam affingat: nisi nunc etiam quum ab Angelo invisitur, eandem nescio apud quos fabulantem, aut rei fortassis culinariae vel agrariae incumbentem depingat, nimirum ut suae in maledicendo libidini potius inservire, quam tantae Virginis, vel ullius decori rationem habere videatur. Retundit autem hoc inane Lutheri figmentum, nec uno quidem in loco Ambrosius, clarissime pronuncians: Solam in penetralibus, quam nemo virorum videret, solus angelus reperit'.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.: 'quin etiam tum sibi minus sola videbatur, quum sola esset'.

picture purveyed by Luther and his ilk, he also offers it as a template for our meditative image-making. As such, it allows us to identify with both *dramatis personae*: having retired into solitary prayer, in imitation of Mary, we may envisage the coming of the angel, or rather, angelic image that makes known the mystery of the Incarnation; or alternatively, we may see ourselves in the image of Gabriel, penetrating the Virgin's retreat, entering the solitary place of chaste repose, and delighting to discover her out of sight yet visible to us, her pure hands raised in fervent prayer (*vident levare puras manus in oratione*). Canisius advises us to visualize these things on the model of Bernard's *Homilia 3. de beata Virgine*, whose *bonas cogitationes*, attaching to these salutary sights, will engender our own good thoughts.<sup>85</sup>

Canisius develops his argument concerning the exemplary image of the Annunciation to be counterposed to sectarian, that is, heretical images, in chapter 12 of Book III, "On the Reasons Why the Catholic Custom of Saluting Mary Is Especially Censured in Our Day, and How in Those Same Words of Angelic Salutation, the Manifold Dignity and Excellence of Mary Are Contained". Although the sectarians admit that what God accomplished in and through Mary must be contemplated, that is, beheld, observed, and considered, they purposely neglect to bear witness to her person (*hi in Maria quid fecerit Deus, contemplandum quidem esse pronunciant, sed personam ipsam fere negligunt*); it is as if they were looking closely at an inanimate thing, notable only for its manifest effects, but itself worthy of little or no honor (*perinde ac si rem inanimatam ob illustres quosdam effectus velint considerari, honorari autem minime*), or again, as if they regarded her as justified and sanctified solely by divine commission, without personal merit or agency (*aut quasi ex mera Dei imputatione iustam illam sanctamque tantum faciant*).<sup>86</sup> The *Annunciation* print answers to the distortions in this sectarian image, remedying them by calling forth a different manner of beholding [Fig. 6]. First, Mary is seen to move animatedly: as the presence of God enlivens her soul, so her body quickens; her fluttering hair and mantle, its rotary folds spiraling around her right thigh, suggest that she has just executed simultaneous yet opposing motions, falling backward from a kneeling position and at the same time bending forward, her arms crossing at

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> "Quibus ex causis usus Catholicus in Maria salutanda hodie potissimum improbetur: quomodo itidem salutationis Angelicae verbis multiplex Mariae dignitas & excellentia contineatur", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 314.

her heart. The billowing veil and the concentric hatches shadowing her face register a double motion: her head seems to swing away from Gabriel and the bright beam of divine light, but conversely, also to swing toward both. Similarly her eyes, the eyelids brightly lit, seem to fix upon the open book, or alternatively to descend, or yet again, to begin to rise. Reconciled in the person of Mary, these contrary motions evoke the full spectrum of events encompassed by the Annunciation: her initially startled response to the angel, from whom she draws back, but also her attentive response to his message, every word of which she leans forward to hear. On the one hand, her bent body expresses the impulse to react humbly, modestly, and obediently; on the other, gesturing toward herself, her hands indicate the desire to question the angel, to know how she a virgin might conceive Jesus. Her arms intersect, making the sign of the Cross, that stands for her willingness to carry the burden of Christ; this gesture signifies the crucial moment of consent. That her eyes connect to the book implies that she has been meditating on Psalm 44, just as Canisius avers; that light shines brightly onto the crown of her head, raking her lowered eyes, even while shadows cover much of her face and torso, alludes to Luke 1:35, in which the angel declares that Mary will be illuminated by the Holy Spirit and overshadowed by the power of the Most High. Enhanced by the elaborate layering of hatches and cross-hatches, her complex pose and drapery show that she is ornate, elegant, and adorned with an abundance of divine gifts (*ornata, elegans [...] divinis opibus exaggerata & exulta*).<sup>87</sup> Second, the *Annunciation* print not only mobilizes the Virgin, insisting that she is no *rem inanimatam*, but also demonstrates that she plays an active role in the mystery of the Incarnation, being no mere instrument of the divine will: signaling this truth, the print evenly distributes the pictorial foci along a diagonal axis anchored above by the Holy Name of God resplendent at the apex of the archway, and below by the jointly shadowed and illumined Virgin at the base of the canopied sanctum. Gabriel's scepter, symbol of the sovereignty of the Word, transects this diagonal that marks the passage of divine light between God and the Virgin.<sup>88</sup>

Poised between light and shadow, Mary may further be seen as a liminal figure who demarcates the threshold of the visible: according

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *ibid.*: 'Quod lumen ac decus ex hoc orbe nostro prodiit illustrius, ac prodire unquam potest?'



to Canisius she is the living horizon, free of all corruption, whence following the dense night there rises Christ the heavenly Sun – destroyer of sin, conqueror of death, restorer of life, and teacher of all justice. (*Quid inde pollutum ac foedum oriatur, unde peccati destructor, mortis profligator, vitae restitutor, omnisque iustitiae praeceptor, velut Sol e coelo post densam noctem apparet.*)<sup>89</sup> This image of Mary as source of spiritual sight derives chiefly from the imagery of reciprocal vision in Psalm 18, that describes the relation between the lightsome Lord who enlightens His people's eyes and the faithful servant whose heartfelt meditations remain always in the Lord's eyes. Canisius appends additional scriptural images taken from Psalm 18 and the Song of Songs. Mary is the mountain from which the stone cut by no human hands is hewn, the bridal chamber out of which the bridegroom emerges, revealing himself as brother, mediator, and leader, the living temple within which the Holy of Holies rests joyfully.<sup>90</sup> This layering of visual metaphors represents the many senses of Scripture implicit in the mystery of the Incarnation first announced by Gabriel, then reiterated by Elizabeth, and most importantly, confirmed by the Holy Spirit (*tam multa ac magna illic mysteria & admiranda sensa mirificus Angelus, & post illum Elizabetha sancta, imo Spiritus divinus conclusit.*)<sup>91</sup> In the *Annunciation*, the light that streams into the Virgin's chamber, sharply delimiting zones of shadow, works in tandem with the many sharp-cornered surfaces that meet at right angles – the podium, prie-dieu, canopy, and pier wall. That the Virgin is positioned on axis with the corner pier and canopy serves to emphasize that she defines the threshold between the Old Law (further symbolized by the worn and cracked step in front of the prie-dieu) and the New, that arises into vision at this crucial juncture. She embodies the condition of visibility that makes this sacred image and its corollary images available to sight. Canisius considers such images authoritative, as he suggests in the excursus to chapter 12 of Book III: so many are the *mysteria*, so many the *sensa* contained by the *Annunciation*, that the commentaries written on the angel's words and on Mary's, 'seem merely to exhibit some small part of the treasure of Marian virtue and glory, rather than expounding them' (*qui de his verbis conscripti extant commentarij [...] Marianae virtutis & gloriae opes non explicare, sed parte saltem ex*

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

*aliqua tenuiter ostendere videantur*).<sup>92</sup> If exegesis fails to penetrate the mystery of the Incarnation, doing no more than expose it to view (*ostendere*), then the theologian's words and the picturer's images share common ground, for both represent what cannot be fully apprehended. Or perhaps it would be truer to say, as Canisius implies, that in certain transcendent matters of faith, discursive verbal instruments cede precedence to the affective pictorial effects of epideictic instruments, such as the *Annunciation* print.

Canisius poses the obvious question, what constitutes an acceptable pictorial image, at the start of chapter 12, where he distinguishes between imaginative license and decorum, the former wielded by heretics, the latter by true Christians.<sup>93</sup> License issues from excessive liberty of the imagination, that in turn originates from the conviction that sacred matters may be understood by anyone and everyone:

Today there thrives principally the liberty of judging sacred things, the most pernicious of all plagues to religion, which has now perverted the otherwise felicitous thoughts of many men, so that moved by the authority neither of the Fathers nor the Church, they arrogate it for themselves in whom they trust above all. From this liberty, or rather license (*ex hac libertate, aut potius licentia*), some of them visualize (*intelligunt*) the angel saluting the Virgin as if he were wishing her well in the manner of common folk at a first encounter. Whence Marbachius interprets the [angel's] opening words in this way – *Frew dich und sey güter ding* – that is, “Hey there! Joy and good cheer to you, let it please you to unknit your brow”. Albeit I know not what further meaning and emphasis the German possesses, still I ask, what is this but to translate and transform angelic words into common, nay, rustic speech, of the sort used by even the lowest of men.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Canisius's critique of exegetical license undoubtedly derives from Jerome's famous letter to Paulinus decrying the *scripturae tractatores imperitos et temerarios* who claim the right to interpret Scripture, even though they have no training in biblical studies; on this letter, *Epistola 53*, in Canisius's anthology edition of Jerome's letters, see Pabel, “Peter Canisius as a Catholic Editor” 184.

<sup>94</sup> Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 310: ‘Primum hodie viget libertas de sacris iudicandi, pestis una in religione omnium perniciosissima, quae multorum hodie ingenia nequaquam infelicia depravavit, eoque deduxit, nulla ut veterum aut Ecclesiae auctoritate commoveantur, sibi vero sumant ac fidant plurimum. Ex hac libertate, aut potius licentia, quidam non aliter Angelus hic salutantem intelligunt, quam qui voluerit, ut omnium fere gentium mos est, in primo congressu Virginem salutare, eique salutando fausta precari. Unde Marbachius hoc modo prima verba Germanice interpretatur, *Frew dich und sey güter ding*/ hoc est, Eia lactare, bono animo esto, sive frontem porrige, teque iucundam praesta, etsi Germanicus idiotismus, nescio quam

These salutations call to mind the toasts exchanged at drinking bouts, that for their part resemble the calls to arms traded among soldiers on the front line (*sicut boni milites in acie ad feriendos hostes, sic ipsi ad siccandos cyathos iisdem fere verbis sese mutuo excitant*). On the contrary, the Christian imagination, tempered by the authority of the Church, shall envision Mary and Gabriel in a manner neither coarse, stolid, nor gross (*procul tam crassae mentis, tam pinguis & stolidi imaginatio*).<sup>95</sup> Free of mundane thoughts and idle desires, they shall be seen to converse purely and wisely about the holiest things, not as Erasmus or Johannes Agricola imagine them, but rather, as scriptural usage and the rule of decorum allow (*sensum [...] Christianum veraeque pietati consentaneum inducere*).<sup>96</sup>

Canisius is referring to Erasmus's reading of 'praised' (*laudatam*) for 'blessed' (*pro benedicata*), and to Brentius's reading of 'good fortune' (*bonam fortunam*) for 'benediction' (*benedictio*), that improperly convert an elevated image of the Annunciation into a trite and commonplace image. In his opinion, they absurdly indulge their own judgment—the judgment of the flesh — over propriety and the sense of Scripture (*vero carnis iudicio contra omnem decori rationem & Scripturae morem ridicule indulgere*). Authors of this persuasion carry poetic license too far, substituting a monstrous fiction for scriptural truth (*hoc plusquam Poëticum atque portentosum commentum*).<sup>97</sup> Agricola, for instance, conceives of Gabriel as a youthful lover, of Mary as his beloved: 'Whosoever shall wish to see with devout curiosity how it may have been, let him meditate in spirit on a lone youth, elegantly attired, speaking sweetly to the Virgin, the door shut, whom he openly declares by word and gesture to be the object of his desire'.<sup>98</sup> To visualize the Annunciation in such terms, impudently turning Gabriel into a hopeful suitor, is to judge the event falsely (*perperam iudicare*) by granting profane license the privilege of mocking religion (*atque ex hac prophana in sacris ludificandi licentia*).<sup>99</sup> What is worse, this false image begets other absurd

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maiores vim & emphasin tenet. Quid vero istud est aliud quaeso, praeterquam ad usum civilem, imo & rusticanum, quo vel infimae sortis homines utuntur, angelica verba transferre ac transformare?'

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.: 'Meditetur apud animum suum, qui volet, pia curiositate, quid sit videre comitulum adolescentem solum cum puella clauso cubilis ostio dulciter alloquentem Virginem, quam se ambire nihil obscure & gestu & oratione declarat'.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

images: Pseudo-Arians, to name one heretical subgroup, allege that Christ intercedes for us in the form of a man, suppliant and prostrate before the Father. This *phantasma* (delusional image) is nothing short of impious, since the mediation of Christ is unbounded: rejoicing in the advocacy of the saints, He makes them prominent (*excludat*), empowers their prayers and other good works, and chooses to help us by means of them.<sup>100</sup> Having countered the Pseudo-Arians, Canisius now refutes the patently nonsensical image promulgated by the Pseudo-Epicureans, who deny the possibility of intercession by the saints, claiming that their souls, having been separated from their bodies, can neither heed us nor render assistance. They would have us imagine the heavenly souls shorn of sense and intellect, asleep and snoring Canisius knows not where until the day of resurrection from the dead (*usque ad resurrectionem carnis, sine sensu & intellectu nescio ubi dormire & stertere*).<sup>101</sup> Canisius now offers an alternative image deriving from Eucherius and Maximus. The saints see everything, not only those things seen with open eyes and then seen in the mind's eye when the eyes are shut, but also all those things from which they are absent in body (*non solum si oculos claudant, verum etiam unde sunt corpore absentes*); that is to say, their efficacious merits are unconfined by place.<sup>102</sup> They are like the prophet Eliseus who could see his absent servant Giezi accept a forbidden gift, even though they were far apart. That being the case, we may rest assured that the saint who requites our prayers and dispenses his good offices renders himself present as an effective advocate in proportion as our faith is pious. Canisius is admonishing us to imagine intercessory saints as proximate, since our prayers call forth their presence; he paraphrases from Maximus's *Sermon on Saints Nazarus and Celsius*: 'What is diffused by merits is unconfined by place. You have everywhere invoked the Martyr, and he who is thus honored as Martyr perceives you everywhere. And so, this being the case, the present likeness of the efficient sponsor who answers your prayers and bestows his gifts shall be rendered, inasmuch as the recipient's faith is fervent (*in tantum vicina praesentia efficacis praebebitur advocati, in quantum fuerit fides devota suscepti*).'<sup>103</sup> In opposition to Eunomius and Vigilantius, Canisius further

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.: 'Non clauditur locis, quod diffunditur meritis. Invocasti ubique Martyrem, ubique te exaudit ille qui honoratur in Martyre. Moderante itaque eo, qui pensant

insists that the saints' spiritual bodies (*in illo corpore spirituali*) that dwell in heaven and yet inhabit their tombs are capable of becoming manifest to their brothers and co-members in Christ.<sup>104</sup> If we may represent the saints in our prayers, he intimates, how much more should we represent Mary and Gabriel, whose colloquy marks the moment when we are fashioned as Christians.

Canisius means by this that Mary, when she agreed to become the mother of God, became also the mother of us all, for as Christ was formed in her womb, so it became possible for us to be formed in His image as Christians:

Catholics value the angelic office of salutation as worthy always to be preserved, repeatedly and assiduously renewing it, that forgetfulness may in no wise steal upon us, and that forever there may flourish the grateful memory of this high benefice, whereby to initiate human redemption God in heaven looked down upon his handmaid and glorified her above all saints, choosing her to be the most excellent mother and through her fashioning us as Christians in Christ (*nosque per illam in Christo Christianos effecit*). Therefore we judge it pertinent to our Christian duty, that following Gabriel the officer of the Son of God, we should hold Mary in the highest reverence who at that time was made the immortal parent of Christ and of ourselves (*Mariam & Christi & suam parentem iam immortalem effectam*), second to none in heaven, and whom by these words brought down from heaven, as also in other ways, we courteously salute.<sup>105</sup>

If the daily prayer known as the Angelus represents the sublime embassy undertaken by Gabriel that begins the mysterious work of human redemption, it does so in both word and deed, because the sublime mystery of the Incarnation surpasses what the words alone of the Annunciation conveyed or allowed to be seen (*Gabriëlem summi mysterij & divinissimi operis nuncium ac interpretem, non humano more, sed ex Dei voluntate, & longe quidem sublimius, quam haec salutationis verba prae se*

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vota tua & dispensat munera sua, tantum vicina praesentia efficaciae praebebitur advocati, in quantum fuerit fides devota suscepti'.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.: 'Quod salutantis Angeli officium tanti apud Catholicos valet, ut istud sibi perpetuo retinendum, ac novo subinde studio in usum revocandum putent, nulla ut obrepat oblivio, sed grata vigeat semper memoria summi beneficii, quo Deus ut redemptionem ordiretur humanam, hanc suam ancillam e coelo respexit, et in electissimam Matrem elegit, ac prae Sanctis aliis glorificavit, nosque per illam in Christo Christianos effecit. Igitur ad Christianum officium pertinere arbitrantur, ut filij Dei Gabriëlem ducem sequentes, Mariam & Christi & suam parentem iam immortalem effectam, nullique coelitus secundam reverenter admodum habeant, atque cum aliis modis, tum his etiam verbis e coelo delatis officiose saluent'.

*ferunt, suam obuisse legationem*).<sup>106</sup> Opposition to the Angelus, the prayer that represents by reenacting the Annunciation, constitutes a kind of iconoclasm, for it forecloses the devout utility of meditative and theatrical images. This is why Canisius uses metaphors of blindness – dense fog, enveloping mist – to describe the sightless hate of those sectarians who would deprive people of this prayer that bolsters faith in the communion of saints (*complures ab huius etiam salutationis usu & amore avocari, adeoque abhorreere, nimirum circumfusus istis Sectariorum velut nebulis, densaque caligine miserandum in modum impeditos*).<sup>107</sup> Here he alludes to the notion that just as the image of the saints becomes visible to those who ardently invoke them, so the image of the Annunciation becomes visible to those who pray the Angelus, and more than this, the image of themselves united with their fellow Christians in observance of this daily supererogation. Viewed in these terms, the *Annunciation* print becomes the image of the Angelus: it can be seen to portray this representative prayer, the performance of which unites us with the saints and affirms the principle of unity that binds the members of this mystical community [Fig. 6]. We might put this differently, as follows: the *Annunciation* represents the image of Mary and Gabriel that we ourselves aspire to represent in the Angelus; as such, this pictorial image stands for the act of performative representation by means of which we visualize, as far as is humanly possible, the mystery of the Incarnation that exceeds the mimetic scope of mere words. Put simply, the *Annunciation* is the sacred image that allows us prayerfully to imitate more than we could possibly say.

Mary and Gabriel were themselves performing representative actions, as Canisius makes clear in chapter 13 of Book III. Gabriel actively and verbally represents the Trinity that brings to pass the mystery of the Incarnation. He does this first of all by means of a periphrasis that evokes images of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: when Mary inquires how she a virgin should bear a child, the angel responds, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the most High shall overshadow you; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God’.<sup>108</sup> This imagery, by turns abstract and concrete, of hovering, overshadowing, and birth

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 317: ‘Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te, & virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi: ideoque & quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei’.

reveals the action of the Holy Trinity in the mystery to be fulfilled: 'By which verbal periphrasis Gabriel clearly distinguished between the three persons of the most Holy Trinity and exhibited their singular operation in the sacrament of mysterious conception (*qua verborum periphrasi Gabriel tres in sanctissima Trinitate personas non obscure discrevit, ac singularem earum in Sacramento arcanæ conceptionis operationem ostendit*).'<sup>109</sup> Periphrasis is one device marshaled to ensure that Mary willingly and knowingly elects to become the mother of the Savior (*praesenti fide complecteretur sciensque ac volens fieret mater Emanuelis*). Another is the angel's splendid act of salutation (*nuntiat luculenter*), that signifies that 'the author of this most sacred and extraordinary work could only be God and the most blessed Trinity. And for this reason', continues Canisius after Cassianus, 'the angel, when he instructs the Virgin mother, radiantly announces and as it were declares, "In you, Mary, shall all the majesty of God descend, for from you shall be born the Son of God"'.<sup>110</sup> The *Annunciation* print, by showing Gabriel's scepter immersed in the ray of divine light extending from the Holy Name of God to the Virgin, illustrates the notion that he salutes her *luculenter*, revealing the connection between what transpires in her and its majestic source on high. Gabriel's open mouth and left-hand gesture of address indicate that he is speaking to Mary; the scepter he holds tilts up toward God in heaven, points into the radiance that signifies the Spirit coming over the Virgin, and also hovers above her as she conceives the Christ. Gabriel is portrayed, then, in the act of representing in word and deed the Trinitarian mystery of the Incarnation. In this sense, the image of Gabriel is fully representational.

The same is of course true of Mary, whose cooperation in giving us 'that man clothed in her substance (*si Virginem cooperantem spectes, quae de sui corporis substantia virum illum nobis dedit*)', Canisius encourages us to behold, in chapter 15, "From Texts of the New and Old Testament It Is Demonstrated that the Human Nature of Christ Ought to be Attributed to Mary and to Noone Else, in Whom and through Whom the Eternal Word Was Made Flesh". He draws a parallel between her act of bodying forth Christ, and the Spirit's action of showing its efficacious agency (*quatenus illic Spiritus sanctus vim & postestatem suam Dominicae*

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.: '& idcirco Angelus de hac Dei virtute tam nuntiat luculenter, quum Virginem matrem instruit, perinde ac si dicat, In te Maria Dei maiestas tota descendet, quia ex te nascetur Filius Dei'.

*incarnationis effectricem exercuit & ostendit, qui propterea Virgini dicitur obumbrasse*).<sup>111</sup> She provides sufficient visual evidence to certify her signal contribution to the mystery of the Incarnation (*quis ergo non videat, quantum ad Christi generationem Maria contulerit*).<sup>112</sup> Canisius elaborates upon this point, referring to the First, Second, and Third Servant Songs in Isaiah 42, 49, and 50, especially Isaiah 49:5: ‘And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant’. He explains that Christ’s vocation of service derives from Mary’s exemplary virtues of humility and obedience, that is, from the title of servant (*ancilla*) she claimed when she bore Him in her womb. He construes her affirmation of service as a kind of generative botanical image-making: ‘Wherefore just as the form of a shoot issues from the nature of the plant, and wood is wont to produce what is proper to its species, so the mother of Christ, like a flowering branch, begot from the substance of her flesh a man like unto (viz., in the likeness of) herself’. (*Quare sicut germen de natura eiusdem virgulti prorumpit, suaeque naturae formam accipit: & quemadmodum lignum ex eo quod sui generis est proprium, non aliud ex alio quotidie producere solet: ita Christi mater, veluti virga florem germinans, e sua substantia hominem sibi similem procreavit*).<sup>113</sup> The metaphor and simile of the flowering branch comes from Isaiah 45:8, in which the prophet calls upon the clouds of heaven to open and rain forth justice, that the Savior, sprouting from the earth, may flower and bear fruit: ‘Let the heavens descend from on high, and the clouds rain down justice: let the earth be opened and germinate the Savior. Certainly this passage once again signifies the Messiah, begotten from Mary as if from holy ground, and called by that same prophet the shoot and the fruit of the sublime earth’.<sup>114</sup> Two elements in the *Annunciation* print correspond to this rich complex of images from Isaiah: first, the long-stemmed lily beside the prie-dieu, that alludes both to Mary as the *virga ex radice* and to Christ as the *flos ex virga*; second, the Virgin’s bent pose, combined with her crossed arms, that signifies her readiness to bear Christ like a willing handmaid who embraces her condition of servitude. As

<sup>111</sup> “E scripturis novi ac veteris Testamenti demonstratur, Christi naturam humanam non alteri, quam Mariae tribui oportere, in illaque & ex illa Verbum aeternum incarnatum esse”, in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1577) 303.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.: ‘Rorate coeli desuper, & nubes pluant iustum: aperiatur terra, & geminet Salvatore. Nam hoc etiam loco Messias indicatur, ex Maria velut benedicta terra procreandus, qui germen & fructus terrae sublimis ab eodem Propheta nuncupatur’.



Canisius notes, Mary, Christ, and the Cross bear the weight of the Incarnation, for the body assumed by Christ and borne by Mary is the same sacrificial body borne aloft by the Cross and there humiliated, before being raised to the summit of honor (*huius enim corpus non solum de matre assumptum, sed etiam post crucis ignominiam ad summum honoris fastigium erectum fuit*).<sup>115</sup> Stooped as if bearing a burden, the Virgin makes the sign of the cross, thus perfectly embodying the weighty vocation of service she imparts to her Son.

Isaiah undergirds Canisius's account of the representational status of Mary and Gabriel, as he stresses in chapter 13 of Book III. At issue is the mimetic trajectory of the angel's words and the Virgin's reply: when he announces that she shall conceive a Son – *Ecce concipies in utero & paries Filium* – he is alluding to the famous prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 – *Ecce Virgo concipiet & pariet Filium* – that he now shows to be fulfilled in Mary (*ad quae verba velut alludit Gabriel, quum hoc vaticinium non in alia foemina nisi in Maria complendum ostendens*).<sup>116</sup> Her response – *Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* – doubles his mimetic allusion by adapting the allusive words, *Ecce concipies*, into the statement of consent, *Ecce ancilla*. In fact, her phrase is closer to Isaiah's, for both consist of an interjection followed by a nominative. Her choice of words reveals that she is fully aware of this sequence leading from prophecy to allusion, and finally to fulfillment: 'Accordingly, how could she not be blessed, who not only believed the angel's promise, but also experienced it as being fulfilled in herself, when she furnished Christ with as much of her most pure and virginal blood as was sufficient to form the human body of a man, not by the will of the flesh, nor human will, namely, not by conjugal union or the male seed, nor any sensual desire, but by the Father's good will and the Holy Spirit's co-operation'.<sup>117</sup> So the Virgin was aware of the representative value of her words, as also of the angel's, but more than this, Canisius avers, she knew by experience the image of Christ to be portrayed by Paul in Romans 1:3: 'In truth, Paul depicts such a Christ (*talem vero Christum*

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid: 'Proinde non potuit non beata esse quae non modo credidit, sed & ipsam Angeli promissionem in se compleri experta est, quando non ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, id est, non ex coniugali congressu aut virili semine, neque cum ullo sensu libidinis, sed ex Patris bona voluntate & Spiritus sancti cooperatione tantum virginei purissimique sanguinis Christo prae-buit, quantum ad hominis humanae corporis formationem sufficeret'.

*nobis Paulus depingit*), Who was fashioned a man according to the flesh of the seed of David, that is to say, was formed and conceived from the purest blood of the Davidian Virgin, by the work of no man'.<sup>118</sup> The mimetic chain – *Ecce Virgo*, *Ecce concipies*, *Ecce ancilla* – each link of which refers to the act of beholding, thus anchors in a Pauline image of Christ born of the Virgin, that Mary sees as a vatical image at the moment she conceives a Son. This visual image fulfills the verbal images of the prophet and the angel, that Mary then adapted into a verbal image of herself. Seen in this way, the *Annunciation* print may be construed as the Virgin's self-image of the mystery of the Incarnation, her image of herself as the Virgin of the line of David, in whom the Christ is fashioned by the will of God, at the moment when her verbal-visual colloquy with the angel draws to its close.

I have been discussing two illustrations from the *Mariale*, that allow us to discern the rich image-theory informing the treatise. I now want to situate this discussion within the larger context of Canisius's pro-image position, or better, his anti-iconoclastic arguments, as these are set out in chapter 22 of Book V, "On Ancient and Modern Iconoclasts, whose Furious Assaults upon Images and Sanctuaries Are a Wholly Intolerable Error Justly Condemned by the Church; and How on the Contrary, the Early Church Always Used and Honored Images of the Virgin Mother of God, which Were Sometimes Divinely Commended by Miracles". Canisius launches a multi-pronged apology; he refers explicitly to venerable icons, such as the *Salus Populi Romani* preserved in Santa Maria Maggiore, but his defense encompasses other types of images, including pictures of the exemplary deeds of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. Citing the Second Nicean Council, he calls upon all Christians to pay their respects to the Lord's apostolic and prophetic images, as also to the saints' images, but chiefly those of the Holy Mother of God, all of which instruct us in good works and offer examples of Christian faith and the imitation of Christ (*salutamus sanctas Dominicas Apostolicas & Propheticas, item Sanctorum, praecipue autem Dominae nostrae Deiparae imagines, quae nobis veluti exemplaria sunt & institutiones bonorum operum, imitationis & fidei erga Christum*).<sup>119</sup> The sanctity and

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.: "Talem vero Christum nobis Paulus depingit, qui homo ex semine David secundum carnem factus sit, hoc est, qui ex Virgine Davidica, & e purissimis eius sanguinibus, licet sine ulla viri opera, formatus fuerit atque conceptus".

<sup>119</sup> "De veteribus & novis Iconomachis, quorum in sacras imagines & aedes irruentium furor sit plane intolerabilis, et error ab Ecclesia iure damnatus. Deiparae autem

excellence of these *exemplaria* are further commended by the Greek Father, Archbishop Photius of Constantinople, who admonishes the faithful to revere and cherish these sacred images of Christ, Mary, and the saints.<sup>120</sup> Following scholastic convention, Canisius incorporates a reference to the theologian Gabriel Biel, who explained that the honor paid to *ipsas imagines* passes through their accidental, that is, representational properties to the prototypes represented, who alone are worthy of veneration (*ipsae imagines per accidens honorantur, non propter virtutem, potentiam ac gratiam eis inexistentem, sed propter repraesentationem eorum, quibus talia insunt*).<sup>121</sup> By means of these sources, Canisius insists that the beholder, whether viewing holy icons or sacred images, must remain alert to their pictorial status as representations of that which they portray. His account of the representational character of Mary and Gabriel in the *Annunciation*, like his viewing of the *Pulcherrima Virgo* as the contemplative image of the Virgin's self-image, arises from the conciliar and orthodox conviction that such *imagines* are valuable precisely as mimetic instruments.

Canisius makes the corollary claim that the close and intimate relation between Mary and Jesus ensures that any image of the Virgin will double as a sign of God in Christ: 'Basil rightly teaches that by honoring our fellow servants, we signify the good will we hold toward our common lord: and by showing honor to the sign or image of the mother of God (*honorem signo seu imagini exhibemus*), in like manner we attest our good will toward God Himself, for according to the Ambrosian dictum, he who crowns the emperor's image, most certainly honors him whose image he has crowned (*qui coronat imaginem Imperatoris, illum utique honoret, cuius imaginem coronavit*).'<sup>122</sup> In this formulation, *imago* and *signum* are compared to *conservus*: if we honor a Marian image by crowning it, we are really honoring Mary herself, the handmaid of Christ the Lord; and since to honor the Lord's servants is to honor Him, we are also paying homage to God, which is to say that the

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Virginis imagines in veteri Ecclesia semper usitatas & honoratas, nonnunquam & miraculis divinitus commendatas fuisse", in Canisius, *De Maria Virgine* (1583) 759.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 764–765: 'Recte autem Basilius monet, honorem quem conservis exhibemus, benevolentiae erga communem Dominum esse significationem: ac proinde quem honorem Deiparae signo seu imagini exhibemus, etiam benevolentiae in Deum ipsum est testificatio, quum secundum Ambrosij dictum, qui coronat imaginem Imperatoris, illum utique honoret, cuius imaginem coronavit'.

image of Mary functions as it were as a servant of the Lord, and in this respect functionally represents her self-image as *ancilla Domini*.

If Marian images are defensible as *exemplaria* and *servitudinis Dei signa*, they chiefly merit to be treated reverently because they make visible what first became representable through the mystery of the Incarnation. Canisius quotes Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, who implicitly compares images of Christ to relics of the Holy Face – Abgar’s veil and the sudarium – and then justifies images of Mary as tokens of the virginal flesh whence was begotten the flesh of Christ:

Firm in faith, we delineate the imprint of Christ’s flesh, saluting that which we deem worthy of seemly worship and honor, as a remembrance of the vivifying and inimitable divinity of His humanity (*sanctae Christi carnis characterem in imaginibus delineantes salutamus, & cultu & honore omni quo decet dignamur, nec aliud nisi in recordationem divinitatis illius vivificae & inexpressae humanitatis*). [...] For the same reason, we represent the likeness of the holy and inviolate Virgin mother of God (*intemeratae eius iuxta carnem matris sanctae Deiparae Virginis similitudinem referimus*), thus showing that she, a woman according to nature, by no means foreign from us in body, conceived in her womb and from herself bore incarnate the invisible God who holds all things in his hand, beyond the judgment of men and angels (*Deum invisibilem, & omnia manu sua continentem, ultra omnem & hominum & Angelorum existimationem in ventre suo conceperit, & ex se incarnatum genuerit*).<sup>123</sup>

As the image of Christ was miraculously imprinted, so we portray Him, the invisible God made representable by the mystery of the Incarnation, and so too, we portray His mother, whose likeness to womankind represents her Son’s humanity, the affinity He shares with us in the flesh. This imitable humanity is inextricably united with His living and inimitable divinity, a truth that images of Christ, and at one remove, images of Mary compel us to recollect. More than this, worshipful praise bestowed on Christ either directly or by way of the Virgin is not only mediated by images, but is itself like the act of picturing the image of His flesh (*Christi carnis characterem in imaginibus delineantes salutamus*). So Marian images perforce remind us of the God we could not see, as also of Christ whose human form certifies that the Word was made flesh through the Virgin.

Then again, Marian images are warranted because Saint Luke, intimately familiar with the Virgin (*Mariae admodum familiaris*), first por-

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 759.

trayed her by hand after the life (*quam divus Apostolus Lucas suis ipse manibus depinxit, illa adhuc vivente*), and more importantly, because Mary herself beheld this Lucan image and transmitted to it her beauty of form (*tabulam ipsam vidente, gratiamque adeo illi formae suae immittente*).<sup>124</sup> Luke did this, Canisius infers, since so many early Christians burned with desire to see Mary face to face, and seeing her, to admire and venerate what they were privileged to behold. He is referring to Dionysius the Areopagite, who so longed to lay eyes on the mother of God and speak with her, that he journeyed from Athens to Jerusalem; and also to Ignatius of Antioch who, himself intensely desirous of seeing Mary with his own eyes, equated Christian faith with this desire visually to admire her (*quem enim non delectet eam videre & alloqui [...] si sit nostrae fidei & religioni amicus*). The image Luke wrought was a pious and prudent device that enabled the multitudes of her admirers to receive the portrait of her face on panel (*ut Mariae vultum saltem in tabella depictum exciperent*), as a perpetual monument whence they might draw consolation, wheresoever they were, and which they could circulate among themselves (*hocque perenne monumentum, tum praesentes tum absentes ad suum solatium retinerent, alique aliis invicem communicarent*).<sup>125</sup> From the Lucan original, first installed in the so-called Tribunal erected in Constantinople by Pulcheria Augusta, derive the truthful copies that survive to this day, whose fidelity is confirmed by their close correspondence to the descriptions of Nicephorus and Epiphanius: 'Moreover, the exemplar of this sacred picture, faithfully transcribed from the Lucan archetype (*sacrae picturae huius exemplar, quod ex archetypo Lucae fideliter exceptum est*), is still to be seen, and as they say, found in Venice at the home of the most famous painter Titian, wherein may be discerned all the distinguishing features of the most holy Virgin's form and stature that, as previously noted, Nicephorus recounts and expounds according to the description and judgment of Epiphanius (*in eoque spectari aiunt notas omnes, quas Nicephorus memoratus alio in loco exposuit, ubi staturam formamque sanctissimae Virginis ex Epiphaniij sententia describit*).'<sup>126</sup> Since Simon Metaphrastes ascribes to Luke the first portraits of Christ, the Marian

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 760.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.: 'Caeterum sacrae picturae huius exemplar, quod ex archetypo Lucae fideliter exceptum est, in hunc usque diem extare, & Venetiis apud celeberrimum pictorem Titianum inveniri dicitur, in eoque spectari aiunt notas omnes, quas Nicephorus memoratus alio in loco exposuit, ubi staturam formamque sanctissimae Virginis ex Epiphaniij sententia describit, ac nos eandem alibi recensuimus'.

archetype, adduced by Theodorus Lector as having been made after the life, may possibly have resembled these earlier works executed in wax or delineated with lines (*ut Simon etiam Metaphrastes affirmat, cera & lineamentis Christi figuram expressit, atque, ut Theodorus Lector exponit, imaginem quoque genitricis Dei ad vivum depinxit*).<sup>127</sup>

How then does Canisius address the question of authenticity, given the fact that multiples of these Lucan images exist in various churches, a point mockingly made by Flacius Illyricus in the *Ecclesiastica historia* (viz., the *Magdeburg Centuries*)?<sup>128</sup> Canisius first of all asserts that nothing prevents us from supposing that Luke, an excellent painter, zealously executed several Marian icons of this sort, either upon request or by his own accord, as a service to fellow Christians (*nec esse quicquam incommodi, si credamus, egregium pictorem Lucam sive ultro, sive rogatum, plures unius generis Icones, quae Mariam exprimerent, in aliorum gratiam cupide depinxisse*).<sup>129</sup> Even if we concede that he produced only one archetype, we could then legitimately assume that the derivative images, especially the earliest of them, having been made after this original, retained the beloved name of their authoritative source (*licet aliena manu factae fuissent, Lucae nomine commendari potuerunt: quoniam cum primae inter vetustissimas ad Lucae archetypum essent expressae*).<sup>130</sup> This same icon, whether the one fashioned skillfully after the life by Luke's hand or one of the images rendered after it, was already preserved in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore during the papacy of Gregory the Great.<sup>131</sup> Canisius imagines an unbroken chain of images after images anchored to this Lucan first image, all of which are ultimately united by their common reference to the prototype Mary.

He similarly imagines a chain of pious beholders extending from Luke to himself, a Christian lineage comprised by Ignatius of Antioch and Dionysius the Areopagite, by the Greek and Latin Fathers, by the participants at the Second Nicean Council and the Synod of Frankfurt, and by the many individuals – high and low, lay and clerical – whose examples Canisius cites: Stephen Martyr who placed healing

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 761, for Canisius's paraphrase of Flaccius's contention.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.: 'Illud constat, aetate Gregorij Magni hanc ipsam imaginem Lucae Evangelistae, sive illam quidem eius manu affabre elaboratam, sive ex ea quam ipse fecit ad vivum expressam Romanis notissimam simul & celeberrimam, & iam tum in aede Deiparae ad praesepe in Exquilis sitam, eximia populi religione servatam fuisse'.

images of Christ and of Mary before an Armenian invalid;<sup>132</sup> Gregory the Great who conferred Marian images upon those men he deemed worthy of this highest honor;<sup>133</sup> John the Anchorite whose prayers before an image of the Virgin and Child rendered his votive candle miraculously inextinguishable and thus strengthened his faith;<sup>134</sup> Andronicus Senior who sought refuge with the Hodegetria when his grandson stormed the imperial palace at Constantinople;<sup>135</sup> Heraclius who armed himself with an icon of the Theotokos in his battle against Cosdroes;<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Comnenus who placed an image of the invincible Mother of God in his triumphal chariot after defeating the Pannonians, and then processed behind it;<sup>137</sup> Constantine Paleologus who humbly ceded pride of place to this same image after retaking a captured town;<sup>138</sup> Louis the Pious who affixed copies of a venerable Marian icon to trees in the forests and solitary places whither he repaired to hunt and to pray;<sup>139</sup> Thomas More who endorsed the thaumaturgic image of the Virgin in sight of which Roger Wentworth's daughter was finally exorcised;<sup>140</sup> the nameless monk who, heeding the advice of Abbot Theodorus Aeliota, abjured the devil's blandishments and instead continued to pray before an image of Mary holding the infant Christ;<sup>141</sup> and all those who, knowledgeable of the distinction between image and prototype, piously and prudently venerate neither the painting nor the painter, but rather the person represented (*non tam de auctore sive pictore, quam de persona per imaginem repraesentata sibi curandum esse sciunt*).<sup>142</sup> Canisius's zealous defense of *imagines sacrae* attaches him to these paragons of Marian piety, whose public and private, triumphant and therapeutic, penitential and consolatory recourse to images the *Mariale* invokes, convokes, and figuratively emulates. The treatise is a repository of verbal and pictorial images deployed to underscore the legitimacy and justify the efficacy of visual devotion; they serve as well to demonstrate the author's resolute faith in such devotional

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 763.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 762.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 763.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 760–761.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 762.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 761.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 764.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 763.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 764.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 762.

auxiliaries: like Stephen Martyr, Canisius offers them as sources of healing; like Gregory the Great, he honors us by conveying them; like John the Anchorite he confirms them as instruments of the Virgin's miraculous agency; like Andronicus Senior he shows us that they are our refuge; like Heraclius he uses them to battle against heretics; like Emmanuel Comnenus, he triumphantly lauds them over their detractors; like Constantine Paleologus, he brandishes them against usurpers of the Church; like Louis the Pious, he installs and circulates them in the public and private places visited by his book; like Thomas More he certifies their validity and potency; like the anonymous monk, he insists on praying before them; like his fellow image-users, he venerates Christ, Mary, and the saints by way of their likenesses, through which his devotion transits. As he interacts with images, implicitly accompanied by this communion of beholders, so he invites us to attend the Virgin by fixing our gaze on her images and thereby joining this virtual congregation.

Canisius construes such participation as an act of faith based neither in doctrine nor injunction, but rather in consensus: 'as has often been the case elsewhere, so also here we give assent to the faith of the forefathers (*in fide Maiorum libenter acquiescunt*), judging it far wiser to do this than to serve the disputatious. For the Church neither teaches nor requires that faith be fixed in such things (*certam enim fidem de his rebus nec docet, nec exigit Ecclesia*); yet it is characteristic of the exceedingly arrogant, the absurdly knowing, and the vainly and foolishly curious, that they contradict the commonly held and received belief of good men (*communi autem & receptae bonorum opinioni*).<sup>143</sup> In this passage, he expressly sanctions the use of Marian images by common consent, having previously justified the many attributions of Marian icons to Saint Luke (*nihil offendit, similes imagines Virginis pluribus in locis conspici, ac eidem auctori Lucae a multis ascribi*).<sup>144</sup> That his terms of condemnation directed at iconoclasts – *nimum arrogans, praepostere sapiens, vane & insulse curiosus* – derive from the earlier discussion of illicit *licentia* (and of its licit antonym *imaginatio*), intimates that the hatred of sacred images

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.: 'ita hic etiam in fide Maiorum libenter acquiescunt, multo id esse consultius, quam deservire contentionibus arbitrantes. Certam enim fidem de his rebus nec docet, nec exigit Ecclesia: communi autem & receptae bonorum opinioni contradicere, aut nimum est arrogantis, aut praepostere sapientis, vel alioqui vane & insulse curiosi'.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.



originates in their licentious misuse, as also in the presumptuous and unbridled impulse to question their sanctity, pedigree, and authority. In this sense, *imagines sacrae* function in the *Mariale* as a synecdoche for the Church.

Whereas images strengthen the memory of Christ, Mary, and the saints, and shore up faith, having been applied to this end from the earliest days of the Church (*primis aetatibus Ecclesiae [...] piarum imaginum usum a Christianis agnitus receptumque fuisse, praesertim ut Christi, Mariae & Sanctorum grata memoria in credentium oculis perpetuo ferretur, & hinc Ecclesiae fides ac religio magis magisque stabiliretur*), the iconoclasts guard against any vestige of the old piety, and judging it glorious to have stripped Christian sanctuaries of their ornaments, convert them all into an abomination of emptiness (*sed pro Christianis templis abominationem desolationis facere ac retinere sibi gloriosum etiam arbitrantur*).<sup>145</sup> Opposed to *imaginatio*, iconoclastic license confronts us with the unimaginable sight of a form without form – churches shorn of images, that resemble Jewish temples and Muslim mosques: ‘How is it that in our day their strange piety has grown and visibly progressed to such an extent, that they think themselves to have acted truly and admirably, when they impose a truly formless form, or if you will, a Jewish and Moham-medan face upon Catholic churches, which thus overlaid they preserve (*si formam prorsus informem, aut si mavis, Iudaicam & Mahometicam faciem Catholicis templis inducant, inductamque conservent*)’.<sup>146</sup> Canisius expresses horror at this paradoxical sight that seems peculiarly to arise from the very action of erasure. Even Luther interdicts these barbarians whose attacks on images the devil propagates for slaughter’s sake and the spilling of blood (*per quod sanguinem profundat, & caedes faciat in orbe terrarum*).<sup>147</sup> Against this vile end, Canisius promulgates a reflexive visual remedy: he imagines an historical *catena* of sacred images reverently beheld by pious viewers who cast their gaze toward Mary – mother, daughter, and bride of Christ, and more than this, herself the consummate beholder of the *Deiparae Virginis imagines*.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 758.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.: ‘Quid quod nova istorum pietas ita crevit, tantosque progressus nostro seculo demonstravit, ut secum illi praeclare & prorsus Evangelice agi putent, si formam prorsus informem, aut si mavis, Iudaicam & Mahometicam faciem Catholicis templis inducant, inductamque conservent?’.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 757.

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